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Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-92-143
Friday
24 July 1992

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-92-143 *24 July 1992*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

The foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon—as well as Palestinian representatives—have opened a conference in Damascus on 24 July to discuss coordinating and unifying Arab positions at the upcoming peace talks, SANA disclosed.

Lebanon

Speaking at a joint news conference from Zahlah at the end of Secretary Baker's visit, Foreign Minister Buwayz reaffirmed that "the Lebanese Government is determined to impose its authority over all Lebanese soil." Radio Free Lebanon noted that the Baker visit demonstrates that the United States "strongly supports implementing the al-Ta'if accord in letter and spirit." Meanwhile, a political commentary carried by Voice of the Oppressed charged that Baker's Middle East tour "is aimed not only at securing the flow of oil and wealth, but also at the U.S. election and the personal ambitions of President Bush." In others news, the Lebanese cabinet issued a decree setting the dates for parliamentary elections, Beirut radio reported.

Syria

Addressing a Damascus news conference held jointly with Secretary of State James Baker, Foreign Minister al-Shar' said his government hopes that "new developments" in the region will help "all parties concerned" to resume bilateral peace talks "as soon as possible," according to Damascus radio. Al-Shar' said the peace process had been hindered over the past 10 months by "the fact that the Shamir government did not want peace," adding that "the Arabs alone should not be asked to display more flexibility." Al-Shar' said Israeli settlements in the Golan "are illegal" and that acceptance of any type of settlements in the occupied territories would constitute "recognizing occupation." He said his government his "talking about a complete halt and freeze to settlement-building," noting that Syria's position on U.S. loan guarantees to Israel "is linked to conditions being set for granting these guarantees." The foreign minister said that "we in Syria" are "always willing" to resume peace talks "as soon as possible."

Iran

Citing Tehran-based Iraqi resistance sources, IRNA reported that the Saddam Husayn regime is pumping water out of the al-Amarah Province marshlands to force out anti-government insurgents. In a letter to the UN secretary general, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI) warned that if Baghdad succeeds in its "sinister plan," more that 200,000 marshlands residents could face drought and starvation, according to the press agency.

Israel

Authorities barred two Palestinian peace negotiators from crossing into Jordan for political consultations 23 July, Jerusalem TV disclosed. Other Palestinian delegation members en route decided to cancel their travel "in solidarity with their colleagues." The delegation issued a statement condemning the Israeli move and called on the Israeli Government "to allow all members of the Palestinian team to travel abroad freely." In another development, a delegation of "Israeli Arab figures" will leave the country 24 July for Carthage in Tunisia, Jerusalem TV reported. The delegation will stop over in Cairo to meet with "a number of Egyptian officials" on the way to meetings in Tunisia with PLO officials.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab Ministers Meet in Damascus To Coordinate

Syria's al-Shar' on 'Open Agenda'

NC2407065392 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Excerpts] Our correspondent in Damascus has reported that the coordination meeting of the foreign ministers of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Palestine will be held today at the Damascus Sheraton Hotel at the invitation of Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' to coordinate stands in light of regional developments and to draw up a unified concept of the bilateral peace negotiations.

The Lebanese delegation, led by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, arrived in Damascus at 1900 yesterday. Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' received the delegation at the hotel. Jordanian Foreign Minister Kamil Abu-Jabir was also there. [passage omitted]

Asked about the meeting's agenda, Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shar' said: It is an open agenda and it aims to analyze and assess the situation in light of recent developments following the Israeli elections in order to reach a single interpretation. We also hope and expect to coordinate on the next stage of the peace talks. Merely reaching a united Arab stand is an important thing. We hope to continue along this course.

Asked whether the meeting will be seven- or five-sided, al-Shar' said: It will be a five-sided meeting.

To a question whether Saudi Arabia and Morocco will attend, he said no. Asked whether they have been invited but declined to come, he said: They have not been invited. We thought of this and invited the secretary generals of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union. According to the brothers' rules in the Gulf and Maghreb, there is a need for consultation before the secretary generals are sent. But as time was short, they could not agree on sending a representative.

Asked whether what Secretary of State James Baker told Syria will help the objective of Friday's meeting, he said: I believe that it will help because what we heard from Secretary Baker about developments and his impressions of his meetings in Israel and the policies of the new Israeli Government will help bring about the speedy resumption of the peace process and the bilateral negotiations.

Replying to another question, Minister al-Shar' said: The aim of the meeting is to coordinate the concept of defending the just cause of our Arab nation and herein lies the importance of the meeting. Its importance increases in view of recent developments, such as the exit of the Shamir government, which was impeding the peace process, and Secretary Baker's recent tour of the region. All these things compel us, as an Arab party that is deeply concerned with retrieving our occupied territories and ensuring the national legitimate Palestinian rights, to take the unified and joint Arab stand that will spare us many slips and rifts at a very critical stage for our Arab nation.

Asked whether he believes that the Israeli Government's decision to freeze settlements should be countered by a step by the Arab side or by U.S. loan guarantees, al-Shar said: The Arab side has shown all the required flexibility. The Madrid conference would not have been held had the Arab side adopted an intransigent stand. There have in fact been no results so far in the bilateral peace negotiations because of Israel's intransigent stand in the past. Therefore, in light of the new Israeli Government's policies, we are expecting progress in the peace process in accordance with the bases of the Madrid peace conference. These bases are: implementation of Resolutions 242 and 338, the principle of land for peace, and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Jordanian, Lebanese Officials Arrive

JN2307195592 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1810 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Jordanian Foreign Minister Dr. Kamil Abu-Jabir and Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, along with their accompanying delegations, arrived in Syria this evening to attend meetings of the Arab parties involved in the peace talks which will be held in Damascus tomorrow.

Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' was at the head of those welcoming the officials upon their arrival.

Abu-Jabir and Buwayz made two statements.

[Begin recording] [Abu-Jabir] Of course, we are very happy to be in Damascus. However, before I say anything else, I would like to offer my sincerest condolences to His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad on the death of his mother, and on this terrible loss and also to the Syrian Government and people. We offer our sincerest condolences.

Of course, we are always happy to be in Syria and to meet with our brothers and hold talks with them on issues that are of interest to the region. Of course, we have the peace process in mind. As you know, many developments have taken place over the past few weeks, including the Israeli elections and the new rights that have emerged [as heard], as well as U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visit. There is a need to discuss all these issues and to reach an agreement on them, God willing.

[Unidentified reporter] Will Jordan submit something specific to the meeting tomorrow?

[Abu-Jabir] Our basic stand is that we insist on an Arab stand, a comprehensive solution, and coordination among brothers on this issue.

[Reporter] Is there a single working paper?

[Abu-Jabir] This is one of the issues we will think about, God willing.

[Buwayz] We will seize the opportunity of our presence in Damascus to offer His Excellency the president, and his respected family, our sincerest condolences on the death of His Excellency's mother. His Excellency the president has given much to the Arab nation. We share with him his sorrow at the loss of his mother. God willing, we hope that we will be able to meet him in person and offer him the Lebanese people's condolences.

The Damascus meeting falls within the framework of the trend seeking to unite Arab ranks and attain further solidarity and coordination to confront the future stages. The steps that have been attained along this road so far are major steps. This is so because we have reached a new approach in how the Arabs tackle issues and international problems. God willing, this will enable us to deal with this stage with the accuracy that responsibility demands of us. Of course, every country has its own concept. God willing, I believe that we will reach agreement on many points tomorrow, as we did during our recent meetings in Beirut and Amman.

[Reporter] How important is this meeting?

[Buwayz] Of course, this meeting is marked by the fact that it is being held in Damascus, one of the major Arab decisionmaking capitals. In addition to this, this meeting is marked by the fact that it comes in the wake of the U.S. secretary of state's tour of the region, and to clarify some ideas that will inevitably be discussed tomorrow.

[Reporter] Thank you. [end recording]

Palestinian Delegate Comments

JN2407054592 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Excerpts] Meetings of the Arab states involved in the peace talks will be held in Damascus today. [passage omitted]

Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation at the peace talks, and his delegation also arrived in Damascus last night to participate in the meetings of the Arab states involved in the peace talks. Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi made an exclusive statement to SANA in which he said: I am happy to be in Syria which has a history of Arab struggle. He added that this visit is to participate in the meetings of the states involved in the peace talks with the aim of coordinating Arab policies at the upcoming peace talks with Israel. He added: We hope that our meeting will achieve its objectives because, under the current circumstances, it is very important to have a unified position.

In a statement to REUTER upon arrival in Damascus, 'Abd-al-Shafi said that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker proposed that the Middle East peace talks be resumed in Washington in August. 'Abd-al-Shafi explained that the Palestinians have no objection to Washington, and that he expects the talks to be held there. He added that Baker is very optimistic with regard to the Israeli position. However, the Arabs need to know the reality of this position and to see practical measures instead of words.

For her part, Hanan 'Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, affirmed in a television interview yesterday that Israel's failure to halt all settlement activities is a very grave matter.

Egypt's 'Amr Musa Arrives

JN2407083692 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0815 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa arrived in Damascus this morning to take part in the meetings of the Arab states involved in the peace process.

The Egyptian foreign minister was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', senior Foreign Ministry officials, and the ambassador and staff of the Egyptian Embassy in Damascus.

'Amr Musa told reporters that he was carrying a message to President Hafiz al-Asad from his brother President Muhammad Husni Mubarak. He added that he came to Damascus to participate in the meetings of Arab states involved in the peace process.

Meetings Open 24 Jul

JN2407090292 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0845 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Damascus, 24 Jul (SANA)—The Arab states involved in the peace process began their meetings here today. Present were the foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine.

The meetings aim to coordinate and unify Arab positions at the forthcoming peace talks, as well as discuss the latest developments in the peace process and other regional issues.

The Syrian Arab delegation is led by Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar'; the Egyptian delegation by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; the Jordanian delegation by Foreign Minister Kamil Abu-Jabir; the Lebanese delegation by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz; and the Palestinian delegation by Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department.

Palestinian Affairs

Official Says Baker Suggested Washington Talks

LD2307215192 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 23 92 Jul

[Text] Still within the context of the peace moves in the Middle East, Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, chairman of the Palestinian delegation in the peace talks, announced today that James Baker, U.S. secretary of state, has suggested the resumption of the peace talks specific to the Middle East in Washington next month.

Further Comments on Baker's Middle East Tour

Tour Polarizing Jewish Vote

LD2307212192 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Dear brothers, the visible outcome of the tour that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker is currently conducting in the region suggests that the U.S. secretary is not thinking of exerting any pressures on the Israeli leaders to make them change their policies, which are impeding the peace process. All that concerns and preoccupies Baker is the polarization of the Jewish vote in President Bush's favor in the forthcoming elections, and he is prepared to offer Israel loan guarantees to reach this goal.

It is noticeable that Baker has attempted during his tour of Arab capitals to sell the Arabs verbal promises, by the rejection of a settlement in its two kinds, the security and the political. In his own language, he is trying to cheat and deceive the Arabs and hook them on American illusions, by forcing them to provide more concessions for the benefit of Israel, something which doubles the potentiality of attracting the Jewish vote in the elections. In return, we find a serious American readiness to lift the embargo on loan guarantees to Israel.

It has become clear to us that Baker's tour is in reality and fact an election tour dressed up in peace, because what is the meaning of the U.S. Administration's concern for implementing international legitimacy by means of a stick on Iraq, and not applying this legitimacy to Israel? Israel continues to refuse to submit to international will and practices every behavior that is at variance with this will.

Baker must [words indistinct] Arab right as clear as the sun. It is a position which is in harmony with the principles of international law and the requirements of peace, while the main stumbling bloc is represented by the Israeli position, which has not responded to the requirements of peace, and has not yielded to the international ("administration) and the UN resolutions. This submission cannot be achieved without the U.S. Administration stopping its conciliatory policies. It must practice serious and effective pressures to force Israel to implement international legitimacy for being an indivisible whole.

'Rhetorical Promises' Discussed

TA2307173992 Jerusalem AL-SHA'B in Arabic 23 Jul 92 pp 1, 11

[Editorial: "Promises to the Arabs and Loans to Israel"]

[Text] The visible outcome of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's current tour in the region is that the American secretary has no intention of exerting any pressure on Israel's leaders to force them to change their policies, which obstruct the peace process. All that concerns and preoccupies Baker is absorbing the Jewish vote in favor of President Bush in the upcoming elections. He is ready to grant Israel the bank loan guarantees to realize this aim.

It is worth noting that during his tour in the Arab capitals, Baker tried to sell the Arabs rhetorical promises by rejecting settlement in its "security" and "political" forms. By this language he is trying to fool the Arabs and make them rely on the illusions of U.S. promises in a bid to force them to make more concessions to Israel. This will increase the possibility of winning the Jewish vote in the elections, and in return we find a serious U.S. readiness to release the loan guarantees to Israel.

Hence, it is clear to us that in fact Baker's tour is an election tour packaged in peace, from which he is totally detached. Otherwise, what is the meaning of the U.S. Administration's zeal to strictly apply international legitimacy on Iraq while failing to apply it on Israel, which is continuing its refusal to yield to the international will and whose every behavior contradicts this will?

Baker has to understand that the Arab position is crystal clear. It is a position conforming with the principles of international law and the requirements of peace, whereas the main obstacle is the Israeli stance, which has failed to respond to the requirements of peace and submit to the international will and UN resolutions. This submission will not take place unless the U.S. Administration stops its appeasing policies and exerts serious and effective pressure that forces Israel to implement international legitimacy, as it is an indivisible whole.

Palestinian Leadership on Israel's Options

LD2307193992 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The extended Palestinian leadership—the [PLO] Executive Committee, National Council leadership, secretary generals, and a number of the leading cadres—held their extraordinary session of meetings from 20 to 22 July under the chairmanship of brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], head of the state of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, to study the political developments and the new events and their reflections on our national struggle for freedom and independence.

At the end of its extraordinary session of meetings, the Palestinian leadership issued the following statement:

The Palestinian leadership reviewed the situation in light of developments and new events in the Palestinian, Arab, and international arenas, particularly the sincere struggle of our people and our escalating blessed intifadah, which has effectively participated with our struggle in all the political, popular, official, and international fronts in toppling the Shamir government and what it represented in terms of atrocities of occupation,

settlement, expansion, and rejection of the serious international pursuit of a just and permanent peace in the Middle East to guarantee security, peace, and stability in that vital part of the world.

These developments present the new Israeli Government with one of two options: either the option of peace, which secures the legitimate national and political rights of our Palestinian people within the context of the resolutions of international legitimacy and withdrawing from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and establishing a just peace in the region which stems from the principle of land in exchange for peace; or the option of continuing the conflict, the destructive wars, and have more victims and threaten international peace and security, particularly as Israel has nuclear and chemical weapons, which could have grave consequences for the present and future of the people of the region.

On this basis, the Palestinian leadership considers that there must be serious readiness on the part of all sides to achieve a just peace. It affirms to all concerned its stance founded on the resolutions of both the National and Central [Palestinian] Councils, the resolutions of international legitimacy, the initiative of President Bush, and the [principle] of a just and comprehensive peace, and not on the basis of attempts to make separate deals or drive wedges between the Arab sides participating in the peace conference. The precise implementation of the two Security Council resolutions, 242 and 338, means total Israeli withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied during the 1967 aggression, including holy Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the recognition of the legitimate national political rights of the Palestinian people—foremost of which is its right of return, in accordance with Resolution 194, the right to self-determination and to setting up its independent state, with holy Jerusalem as its capital, right through to the establishment of the Palestinian-Jordanian confederation—is the solid foundation for peace and for the implementation of international legitimacy and UN resolutions on the Palestinian question and the Middle East.

The arrangements for the transitional phase to Palestinian authority are but a station for a brief pause on the way to this objective, during which our people exercise the right to hold free legislative elections, under international supervision and protection, away from subjugation, oppression, and the daily attacks by the occupation authorities and their armed settlers against our masses, children, women, lands, and Islamic and Christian sanctuaries.

Therefore, bringing more Jewish Soviet and other emigrants, and also the Zionist settlement policy in the Palestinian and Arab territories, which were occupied by force and arms in 1967, are an illegitimate aggression that contradicts the fourth article of the Geneva Convention and the international resolutions issued by the United Nations. There is no scope for any avoidance of these resolutions by deception through distinguishing between political and security settlements. These names are merely masks and excuses for continuing the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories.

What is required is an immediate and comprehensive stoppage of settlements; stopping all the settlement activities, without exception; and not giving any support or loan guarantees before achieving that.

The Palestinian leadership listened to a report from the Palestinian delegation that met U.S. Secretary of State Baker in Jerusalem last Monday. The leadership assessed the stances expressed by our delegation in its memorandum and the discussions with Mr. Baker and the accompanying delegation, and discussed the opinions he offered.

As it expresses its readiness to participate seriously in the coming negotiations, side by side with the rest of our brother Arab delegations, the Palestinian leadership calls on the American side to reopen the dialogue with the PLO after the experience of the negotiations has proved that overtaking the PLO is nothing but illusions that should be dispelled with the removal of the Shamir government. The comprehensive character of the official Palestinian representation—from inside, outside [the occupied territories], and Jerusalem—of our delegation to the negotiations should be emphasized and achieved in the peace process in both its bilateral and multilateral parts.

While the Palestinian leadership salutes our people's escalating and great intifadah—which is continuing its jihad on the path of victory, freedom, and independence—it has studied in detail the internal situation of our people following the crime committed by the occupation forces against the town of Nabulus and al-Najah University, the siege of this literary edifice. To consider Nabulus, the mountain of fire, as a military zone, to starve and terrify our families and students inside the university, in addition to deporting six nationals from their country, are acts that contravene the fourth article of the Geneva Convention and expose the ugly face of the Israeli occupation in the shadow of the new government.

Regarding the regrettable incidents that took place in the valiant Gaza Strip, the solid fortress of the intifadah, the organization [PLO] stresses to our people its principled and firm commitment to democracy, a multi-party system, and democratic dialogue, as a way of solving differences between the sons of our people and its militant forces. Any harm or aggression against our democratic life, religious, national, and civilized values is considered an attack against the revolution and the intifadah.

All of us within the Palestinian revolution—people, factions, and political forces—have chosen the PLO as a broad national front, a big house that accommodates everybody on the principle of respect, trust, and a democratic participation. The organization represents the moral homeland for the Palestinian people. It is the loyal guardian of the people's aims to return to the homeland, self-determination, and the establishment of

the independent state; it is the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people. Any arrogance expressed against the PLO is in fact an insolence against the noble national goals of the Palestinian people, for which successive generations of the Palestinian revolution have sacrificed themselves.

The doors of the PLO are open for all Palestinian forces that are fighting the occupation for independence under the flag of the national program, as adopted by our National Council.

However, resorting to undemocratic methods and using violence to change Palestinian political facts is a wave against our blessed intifadah and against our national goals, as embodied by the PLO, to return to the homeland, self-determination, and the edification of the independent state whose capital would be Jerusalem.

The Palestinian leadership calls on all forces to conduct a sincere and democratic dialogue between the sons of the one trench to consolidate the unity of people and its mobilization around the leader of its struggle and its legitimate and sole representative, the PLO.

The Palestinian Leadership studied the situation in southern Lebanon and the continuous Israeli attacks against its towns and villages, against our Palestinian camps, and against the valiant Lebanese and Palestinian masses. The leadership salutes this valiant steadfastness by these masses and strongly condemns these criminal hostilities. It calls on the international community and the United Nations to bring an immediate halt to these acts.

The leadership also reviewed the internal organizational situation of the PLO to consolidate and strengthen it to face up to future challenges and to further enhance the bodies of the organization; it adopted numerous resolutions and measures in this connection.

Glory and eternity for our pure martyrs, we salute our valiant prisoners and our injured heros. Salute to our militants in all positions of jihad inside and outside the occupied land. Salutations and praise to the masses of people and our blessed intifadah. Let it be an escalating intifadah until victory is achieved; let it be an ongoing revolution until victory is attained.

All Sides Urged To Prepare for Just Peace

LD2307185992 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The extended Palestinian leaderships [as heard] expressed their readiness to enter the forthcoming negotiations side by side with the remaining Arab delegations. It called on the American side to reopen the dialogue with the PLO, affirming the need to achieve a comprehensive official Palestinian representation at the negotiations by including, in the Palestinian delegation to these negotiations, Palestinian participants from inside and outside Palestine and from Jerusalem, in both the bilateral and multilateral parts of the peace process.

In a statement distributed today in Tunis, following its emergency session, the extended Palestinian leaderships called on all sides to prepare seriously for the achievement of a just peace. It affirmed adherence to its stance based on resolutions of the National and Central [Palestinian] Councils, the resolutions of international legitimacy, the initiative of the American President, Bush, and on [the principle of] a just and comprehensive solution.

The Palestinian leadership said in its statement that the precise implementation of the two Security Council resolutions, 242 and 338, means the total Israeli withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab lands occupied in 1967, including holy Jerusalem.

Algeria

Kafi Discusses Boudiaf Assassination, Next Steps

NC2307155092 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 20 Jul 92 p 4

[Interview with Algerian Higher State Council Chairman Ali Kafi by 'Adil Rida in Algiers, date not given]

[Text] [Rida] To what extent do you consider the assassination of Chairman Boudiaf a crime against the Algerian people? What was the real objective behind his assassination, and how can this tragedy be surmounted?

[Kafi] Late Chairman Boudiaf placed Algeria's interests above all considerations. He maintained the country's unity and stability. This was not to the liking of professional criminals and cowards. The masses have shouted: "With soul and blood, we redeem you, O Boudiaf. The people and the Army are hand-in-hand." These masses know very well where the redeemed homeland's and their own interests lie. This makes us fully confident that the Algerian people will be able to surmount this crisis.

The hail of bullets which killed Boudiaf on the eve of the 30th anniversary of national independence meant to assassinate hope, the hope on which and for which Algeria and its people live.

Chairman Boudiaf did his utmost to marshal the ranks and build a strong structure. He tried to urge all, especially the youth, to shoulder their full responsibility to serve the nation's causes, in accordance with the requirements of this difficult period in Algeria's history.

[Rida] Mr. Chairman, what is required to avoid a greater tragedy?

[Kafi] What is required is brotherly cohesion and a strong determination to consolidate security and stability and to spread reassurance and a spirit of brotherhood to extricate Algeria from this ordeal. Boudiaf's assassination was part of a horrible scheme to destabilize the country and create chaos. This scheme relies on violence, terrorism, sabotage, and plots by various groups united by one aim, that is destabilizing the country. For our part, we stress that Algeria always will remain, as Boudiaf wanted, clean, progressive, and prosperous, the property of its sons, and an asset to the Arab and Islamic nation. Chairman Boudiaf sacrificed himself for Algeria's sake. Hope will not die and Algeria will live for eternity.

We call on all national forces that love peace, justice, and freedom to be vigilant, calm, and patient to foil the plots to destabilize the country and to uphold the principle "Algeria is above all considerations."

All Algerians realize that confronting the plot's perpetrators depends on strengthening their own unity and solidarity. As I said, this deep realization guarantees opposition to all attempts and schemes to destabilize the country.

[Rida] Will there be a change in Algeria's policy following the death of President Boudiaf?

[Kafi] The Higher State Council and the people are determined to continue the national course and to implement the program charted by President Boudiaf, regardless of the cost and of all sacrifices, to regain the state's prestige and standing and Algeria's international reputation, to restore the citizen's dignity and protect him, and to emerge from Algeria's current crisis. We will not hesitate to exert all our efforts to protect the nation's unity. As I said, we derive our strength from God's will and that of the great Algerian people.

[Rida] Mr. Chairman, people are asking about the most urgent tasks now facing the Higher State Council.

[Kafi] We will continue with determination to keep state affairs under control and to achieve stability and security for Algeria. We will do our utmost to purge the national economy and establish it on sound bases. Algeria is rich in surface and underground resources and also is rich in its youth. It has made vast investments to gain expertise and also is rich in the experiences it has gained in the construction field. As you recall, late President Boudiaf reiterated that Algeria's future is in the hands of its youth, who have not been defiled by some rotten political practices. We pray to God to facilitate the process of bringing honest men together and to strengthen confidence among them so that they can discuss together the ways and means of enabling the country to surmount its difficulties and peacefully overcome its problems.

FIS Calls on Soldiers To Oppose Generals

LD2307151792 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] In Algeria the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS], in one of its clandestine communiques, asks, quote, the soldiers faithful to Islam and the people to break down the wall of fear and oppose the traitorous and evil generals, end quote.

Meantime, the atmosphere is still tinged with violence in Algeria where two homemade bombs exploded yesterday, one at the main post office in the center of Algiers and another in a cinema in the town's southern suburb. There were no casualties.

FIS Says Ghozali Appointment 'Affront to People'

LD2207224292 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] Today an Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] delegation protested the appointment of former Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali as ambassador to France. According to the FIS this is an affront to the people.

Egypt

Baker's Stand on Arab-Israeli Meeting Noted

NC2407063692 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0335 GMT 24 Jul 92

[From the Press Review]

[Text] The newspaper AL-AHRAM highlights reports by Israeli newspapers yesterday that U.S. Secretary of States James Baker hopes to arrange a meeting among the foreign ministers of Israel and the Arab states in an attempt to give impetus to the peace process. These newspapers noted that Baker suggested a summit grouping the leaders of the Middle Eastern countries.

AL-AHRAM notes Baker's emphasis that Resolution 242 is based on exchanging land for peace and that the U.S. Administration seeks to resolve the Middle East problem on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338. He stressed the need to use the current opportunity to give momentum to the peace process.

Peace 'Breakthrough' After Rabin, Baker Visits

NC2407054792 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2216 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Cairo, 23 Jul (MENA)—In their Friday editions, the newspapers AL-AHRAM and AL-AKHBAR express the hope that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin will realize he has a real opportunity to do something for regional peace.

AL-AHRAM says that while it is too early to assess the talks held during the visits by Rabin and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to Cairo, all the signs indicate that a real breakthrough for peace has taken place following the elimination of the nightmare of the hardline Likud.

The paper adds that Rabin's Cairo trip and Baker's visit, part of his regional tour, arose out of the powers and parties participating in the peace process believing that Egypt plays a pioneering and indispensable role and that its courageous experience in establishing and maintaining peace has equipped it to perform a task that no other party can perform. This is the establishment of real bridges of understanding among the various parties to encourage them to make mutual contributions to a process of building trust, a necessary prelude to peace.

The paper states that it must be clear: The desired peace is not going to be easy. It will be a road fraught with difficulties that require the Arabs and the Israelis to keep one important fact in mind: One-sided peace and security will not produce a lasting peace and any steps that do not recognize the legitimate rights and vital interests of all the region's nations will be fragile and temporary.

AL-AKHBAR calls on Rabin to demonstrate practically the credibility of the promises he made during the election campaign before his party's victory at the polls and after he formed his government.

It refers to Rabin's repeated declarations after winning the election that he does not want to waste more time, like former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir did once the Madrid peace talks began in October 1991, and that he would like the negotiations to be ongoing after they resume in Rome.

The paper concludes: We hope Rabin will keep his promises.

Israeli Envoy Praises Mubarak Role in al-Najah

NC2407122392 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 20 Jul 92 p 1

[Report by Amirah Hasan in Jerusalem]

[Text] Egypt's Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni has made a statement that President Husni Mubarak's intervention in the problem concerning the Palestinian al-Najah University had a positive effect in resolving it quickly and peacefully.

Palestinian Ambassador Meets Musa, Comments

NC2307125792 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1210 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Cairo, 23 Jul (MENA)—Palestinian ambassador in Cairo Sa'id Kamal stated that Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat will arrive in Cairo next week for talks with President Husni Mubarak on regional developments.

In a statement following his meeting with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today, the Palestinian ambassador said that the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan will meet in Damascus tomorrow to coordinate the Arab stand. He said the ministers will meet periodically in the Arab capitals involved.

Sa'id Kamal added that the meeting discussed regional developments and the peace process after the Israeli elections.

He said the absence of the Arab Maghreb Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council from tomorrow's meeting in Damascus is not a setback; an understanding allows for leaving the choice of participation open and these countries might attend the next meeting after the one in Damascus.

The Palestinian ambassador said there must be a complete halt to Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, because all forms of settlement entrench occupation and cannot achieve security for any country.

Commenting on current differences between the PLO and the Hamas Movement, Sa'id Kamal said the PLO is trying to contain these differences to get a united front against the Israeli position in the peace process.

On moving the peace talks to Cairo, he said the PLO has welcomed such a move since the Madrid conference.

World Bank President Praises Economic Reforms

NC2207095392 Cairo MENA in English 0713 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] Cairo, July 22 (MENA)—President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Louis Preston left here this morning winding up a three-day visit to Egypt. Preston met here with President Husni Mubarak and held talks with Premier Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Fathi Surur, and a number of senior officials.

The World Bank official said before departure that economic reform programme in Egypt achieved good results and is running more swiftly than expected. State Minister for International Cooperation Dr. Maurice Makramallah, who saw off Preston at the airport, said the World Bank official praised the structural adjustment programme and expressed the Bank's readiness to offer aid toward realising economic progress in Egypt.

NDP Congress Makes Final Recommendations

NC2207143692 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] The final session of the National Democratic Party's [NDP] 6th Congress began at 1030 today. The congress unanimously reelected President Husni Mubarak as party leader. Kamal al-Shadhili, NDP assistant secretary general and party organization secretary, addressed the session and announced President Mubarak's nomination for a third presidential term.

NDP Secretary General Dr. Yusuf Wali announced congress' resolutions and recommendations. It recommended five foundations for the NDP's ideological framework: reinvigorating religious values; encouraging the work ethic and popular support for the concept of plurality, a multiparty system, and commitment to legality; commitment to comprehensive development in every sphere and continuing the economic reform process considering the need to provide social justice to achieve development through equal opportunity; and allegiance to Arab civilization and the nation's unity.

The resolutions called for creating an appropriate climate for production in every business sector.

The party announced its belief that foreign policy should operate via Arab, nonaligned, Mediterranean, and African channels. It stressed the importance of enhancing Egypt's international role.

On economic policies, Dr. Wali affirmed President Mubarak's support for economic reform and his success in securing the cancellation of a $7-billion debt owed to the Arab countries and a $300-billion [figure as heard] military debt owed to the United States. He also praised President Mubarak's role in reaching agreement with the IMF.

Mubarak Addresses NDP Congress

NC2307120092 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0831 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Speech by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to the closing session of the Sixth General Congress of the National Democratic Party, NDP, in the Cairo University auditorium—live]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] Brothers and sisters: Before I begin, I would like to tell you that words cannot express my feelings about the genuine and exuberant sentiments you and our great people expressed for my continuing the presidential responsibility and performing my mission in the cause of God and for the homeland. [applause] I am extremely proud of these feelings and I am convinced that these sentiments emanate from profound loyalty to Egypt, its soil, and legacy. I will appreciate this wish when the time comes to make this decision. I ask God almighty to grant us wisdom and guide us on the right path. [applause] God willing, God willing.

Brothers and sisters, members of the NDP General Congress: Now that you have completed your mission and your work at this eventful congress, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to every one of you on winning the masses' trust in the NDP, which has been rebuilt by free elections from the bottom to the top. I extend my appreciation and gratitude to the NDP members for reelecting me as the party's leader and for renewing their trust in my ability to assume this responsibility. [applause] We all take pride in this trust and consider it a democratic development that will place more responsibilities on us and motivate us to make more efforts in loyalty to the people and this great homeland.

This development comes 14 years after the NDP's establishment and after its branches' rich experience of political action and interaction with the masses. This necessitates a qualitative improvement in the NDP's method of work, enabling all its branches to remain active, to interact daily with the masses, to fully express their hopes and aspirations, and to work tirelessly to solve their problems and adopt their positions in issues relating to national action.

The NDP is the guardian of general national interests, so it places the country's basic interests above any other consideration, rejects oneupmanship over patriotism, and shuns personal interests and gains at the expense of the homeland. National action means sacrifice, giving, placing the country's higher interests above everything else, and renewing the pledge and the vow, we die for Egypt. [applause]

This principle, which we regard as a guide for our work and a beacon directing our movement, prompts us to believe in the need to enhance solidarity and cooperation among all legislative and executive institutions and agencies of the state.

There should be no conflict in policies and activities, no (?persisting) on mistakes, no censuring, or reproach. There should be genuine cooperation and healthy competition in work for the good of the country and to safeguard our great people's interests. This principle also requires us to view the other parties in Egypt based on recognizing their right to express the masses' desires and demands. This is the essence of the belief in the notion of pluralism that rejects a monopoly on political action, encourages diverse ideas and interpretations, and remains aloof from accusing those who think differently about nonpatriotism and from doubting their loyalty to the homeland.

All of this should take place on the condition that the prime objective is the public good and that all parties adhere to the morals of national action. They must also realize that they cannot fool the masses with glimmering promises and empty, meaningless slogans, or by falsifying the facts and spreading lies and provocations. This does not solve any problem or ward off any harm. The only outcome of this is to erode the masses' confidence and waste valuable time in useless party maneuvers.

I firmly believe there are national issues deserving everyone's utmost priority and close attention, because they have a strong, direct effect on the country's safety and the prosperity of its people and influence the country's future.

I find no justification for the parties' impotence and refusal to agree on these indisputable national issues. Competing for these issues should be confined to searching for the best methods and means to reach the goal.

I find no justification for the parties to fail or not reach agreement on those national issues on which no one differs. Their competition should be limited to finding the best methods and following the best means to achieve the goal. Let rivals and those who have new initiatives compete. No one will be blamed for upholding a certain view, making a mistake, pursuing a course other than the one pursued by the vast majority of the people, or focusing on finding negative aspects and shortcomings to improve things. No one should slander or sow despair. This is the essence of democracy. [applause] Democracy is a right and obligation. It is a line of thinking and behavior. It is not a plaything used by this or that party to address the masses' emotions to win their favor by false pretenses. [passage omitted]

No one is worthier than our party in following principles and good examples; it is the party of the masses that expresses their values and principles and guards their trust among those who come forward to shoulder the responsibility of public work. Our party safeguards the values of integrity and purity and shuns personal interests, passion, and selfish gains and goals. It cherishes high ideals and the codes of honor and integrity. Let our party always be the party of integrity and purity. Let our action now and in the future be for the sake of God and the homeland.

Dear brothers and sisters, recent years witnessed radical developments on local, regional, and international levels, developments that represent profound change, affecting theories, concepts, and practical policies. Anyone participating in public action and interested in the fate of the homeland and its people must consider these developments in every step he takes. [passage omitted]

Naturally, you devoted your efforts at this congress to formulating a new ideological framework and a new work program for the NDP to cope with these exciting developments and with the new realities we face and help shape. [passage omitted]

When we begin implementing the work program approved by the NDP General Congress, we are duty-bound to safeguard two factors simultaneously: stability and flexibility. Implementing this work program must comply honestly with the goals and the executives must be aware of the goal of every national action. The aim is to help the people progress in every stage, to help the state cope with the requirements of the age and the challenges of the future, and to mobilize the country's human, spiritual, and material potential for building and construction.

There is a national consensus that the condition for achieving this major goal is to ensure social stability and safeguard the country's national security. Security on the domestic front is the foundation of any construction. Without security, efforts in every field of development and construction would fail. Without security, every investment in infrastructure would be useless. Without security, the wheel of progress and modernization would stop. This would greatly harm those who toil for Egypt.

When I speak about safeguarding the country's security, I am not thinking of safeguarding the regime, because this issue does not preoccupy me. I think about and concentrate on safeguarding the Egyptian people's social, cultural, and spiritual structure [applause] and preserving its ability to remain steadfast in the face of overwhelming challenges. I am totally preoccupied with preserving Egypt's ability to survive, progress, and play its undeniable regional and international role. [applause] This cannot be achieved unless Egypt remains dignified and strong and maintains a cohesive social fabric consistent with its God-given social and cultural harmony and with great traditions of tolerance and faith in religion being for God and the homeland for all citizens. [applause]

Brothers and sisters, you know I have no time for threats; it is sufficient to warn and [applause] address myself to the sons of Egypt without exception. Perhaps it is appropriate to address those of Egypt's youths who have been exposed to influences that make them think they have a right and even a duty to condemn all of society, judge others, and break the law. They have gone as far as to kill people, terrify helpless people, and foment a dreadful sectarian sedition. This sedition is alien to the Egyptian

legacy. I say to these youths and to those who placed them in this dark tunnel to fear God for the sake of religion, homeland, and yourselves. Crime does not pay. These sinful acts, which you commit recklessly or whimsically, will only harm the image of true religion and end the lives that God gave you to build on earth, do good, and uphold true religion. Fear God for the sake of Egypt that God almighty mentioned in the Koran and safeguarded as a center of learning, the cradle of civilization, and bastion of freedom, dignity, and humanity.

As long as we live, Egypt will keep its head high, will remain dignified, a pinnacle, and an arena for the free, honest, and pure people. Egypt will not be shaken. Those who seek to harm it will receive retribution. Plots and sedition will not harm Egypt, but will founder on the stronghold of Egyptian patriotism. Egypt will remain a school with proud traditions and teachings. Challenges and intrigues will not conquer the Egyptian people, who are valiant, uphold right, and cherish favors. Egypt bows its head only to God and will not give in to invaders, the corrupt, or saboteurs who harbor ill intentions and view its tolerance as weakness and its patience as leniency. Egypt's will shall remain high, immortal, and above any other will. We will remain Egypt's faithful soldiers, sacrifice ourselves, and die for it. May God grant us success and may God's peace and mercy be upon you. [passage omitted]

Al-Baz on Shaping 'New World Order'

NC2207084092 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2202 GMT 20 Jul 92

[Text] Cairo, 20 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, stressed the importance of participating in shaping the new world order, an order that has not yet assumed a definite form. He said it is very important to act positively and not stagnate to avoid having particular trends imposed on us.

Addressing the Arab and Foreign Affairs and National Security Committee of the National Democratic Party's [NDP] 6th Congress, al-Baz noted that certain features of this world order have started to surface, including a decline in armed conflict, attempts to reduce armaments, greater emphasis on economic factors and their potential for development and the application of technology, and attention to cultural capability, social cohesion, and political skill on the international scene.

He said a new, realistic, and serious concept of inter-Arab cooperation, eschewing the past's empty and useless formalities, must be devised. He urged Arabs to resort to realistic methods to achieve further Arab cooperation.

On stability and achieving Middle East peace, Dr. al-Baz noted the importance of achieving a comprehensive regional settlement based on international legitimacy and on implementing UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the land-for-peace principle.

He explained that such a peaceful settlement with Israel can be reached in stages over an interim period, especially after the recent positive development in Israel and Rabin's coming to power.

Referring to the clearly divergent positions of Israel's two major political parties, the Likud and Labor, al-Baz said Likud believes in establishing Israeli control over the occupied Arab territories based on religious and historical claims, contends that it safeguards Israel's land, and maintains that Israel has the right to build settlements, which is why it embarked on a process of all-out settlement [al-Istitan al-Shamil] to cover the occupied territories with such settlements in 10 years. Labor, he said, accepts the principle of trading land for peace, has halted settlement-building or restricted it, and is focusing on Israel's security needs.

Al-Baz said the prospects for reaching a peace agreement are now greater than before with the Labor Party in power, but we must submit ideas, not wait until they are submitted to us, particularly in the spheres Israel is speaking about, including security, education, and others. He said the Likud and Labor concepts of security are different.

Al-Baz said: We are more optimistic than before. President Husni Mubarak will receive Yitzhaq Rabin and discuss with him some ideas about peace.

He explained that progress has been made in the bilateral and multilateral negotiations with Israel, although Israel is focusing more on the multilateral talks to further some of its interests. He noted: We have other interests, notably restricting nuclear arms acquisition, eliminating weapons of mass destruction in the region, and sparing the Middle East the danger of the nuclear threat. This is why President Mubarak submitted his initiative on ridding the region of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. President Bush supported this initiative and called for reducing nuclear armaments. This clearly shows the importance of participating seriously in shaping the new world order.

Al-Baz told NDP members of a belief in the past that a state had absolute sovereignty; in recent years, a change in this concept occurred. It will continue in the years to come. Sovereignty has become relative in the sense that society now has interests to achieve. New features have appeared, including democracy, human rights, protecting the environment, antiterrorism, and the level of armament. He said Third World countries must properly understand these factors; they will become more important.

Al-Baz urged the Nonaligned Movement to reconsider its aims in light of the international changes to contribute to the new world structure.

'Extremists' Arrested in Mosque Disturbance

NC2407120392 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 20 Jul 92 p 1

['Abd-al-Hakim al-Amir report from Qina]

[Text] Detectives in Qina [Upper Egypt] have arrested five extremists armed with daggers and chains at the al-Fath Mosque in Madinat al-'Ummal, Qina, who attempted to prevent people from entering the mosque to perform the afternoon prayers. Security chief Major General Husayn Tawfiq had received information that five extremists were causing panic among the citizens and preventing worshipers from entering the mosque. The extremists are Sa'd Mansur Ahmad, Muntasir Muhammad Ahmad, 'Abd-al-Hamid Muhammad, Jabir Muhammad Sayyid, and Ruzayqi Yusuf 'Abd-al-Qadir. The security chief awarded the chief investigator and his aides 50 pounds [figure as published] in bonus.

Independent Deputies Form New Parliamentary Group

NC2407083792 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 20 Jul 92 p 6

[Text] Fifteen independent members of the People's Assembly have set up a new parliamentary group called the Independent Group [al-majmu'ah al-mustaqillah], after the parliamentary opposition front comprising the National Progressive Unionist Grouping's members and the independent deputies failed. The new group is made up of the following members: Ahmad Taha, Muhammad al-'Abbasi, Muhammad al-Sandayuni, Rif'at Bashir, Jalal Gharib, Faruq Mutawalli, Tawfiq Zaghlul, 'Ali Basal, Jamal Qutb, al-Rifa'i Hamadah, Muhammad Ghanim, Ibrahim 'Ibadah, 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-'Ulaymi, and Muhammad al- Badrashini. [fourteen names as published]

Natural Gas Field Discovered in Bur Fu'ad

NC2207145492 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0335 22 Jul GMT 92

[From the Press Review]

[Text] The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH reports that a new offshore natural gas well has been discovered in Bur Fu'ad, 40 km north of Port Said. An initial test on the well produced 36 million cubic feet of gas and 162 barrels of condensed material [mutakaththifat] per day. A second test produced 30 million cubic feet of gas and 1,600 barrels of condensed material per day.

Kuwait

Foreign Minister Meets U.S., PRC, UK Envoys

LD2307142592 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1236 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Kuwait, 23 Jul (KUNA)—Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, had separate meetings in his office this morning with U.S. Ambassador Edward Gnehm, PRC Ambassador Guan Zihuai, and British charge d'affaires Larry Walker.

During the meetings, Shaykh Salim reviewed with the three diplomatic representatives the latest developments in the region and the most prominent regional and international issues of mutual concern.

The meetings were attended by Ambassador Abdullah Sa'ud Abd al- Razzaq, director of the minister's office.

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Receives Secretary of State Baker

LD2307213292 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Excerpt] Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd- al-'Aziz al-Sa'ud received in his office at al-Salam Palace in Jeddah today His Excellency U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and the delegation accompanying him. [passage omitted]

Baker Departs

LD2407092692 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0900 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Excerpt] Jeddah, 24 Jul (SPA)—His Excellency U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and the delegation accompanying him left Jeddah this morning. [passage omitted]

U.S. Planes Reportedly Step Up Dhahran Flights

NC2307122992 Paris AFP in English 1159 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, July 23 (AFP)—U.S. warplanes have stepped up their flights to and from the eastern Saudi air base of Dhahran in the past two days, residents reached by telephone told AFP on Thursday.

They reported frequent comings and goings by U.S. fighters and transport planes but did not know what the destinations were.

The stepped up activity came as the United States said it was not ruling out force in the showdown with Iraq over its refusal to allow U.N. weapons inspectors search the agriculture ministry in Baghdad.

Dhahran was a key base during Operation Desert Storm which drove Iraq out of Kuwait early last year.

Yemen

Al-Dali Says Border Talks With Saudis 'Cordial'

JN2307062492 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Excerpt] Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Dali, minister of state for foreign affairs, and his delegation returned to Sanaa from Geneva this evening after heading our country's side to the preparatory meeting to exchange views on the forthcoming arrangements for beginning the Yemeni-Saudi border negotiations.

In a statement to the Yemeni news agency SABA', Dr. 'Abd-al- 'Aziz al-Dali said the talks were held in a cordial and fraternal atmosphere, and that future meetings will be on the level of bilateral technical committees. [passage omitted]

Saddam Chairs Meeting of RCC, Ba'th Command

JN2307184892 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1840 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Jul (INA)—His Excellency President Saddam Husayn today presided over a meeting of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party.

The meeting was attended by Presidential Office Chief Hatim Hamdan al-'Azzawi.

Reportage: Statements, Reports Criticize UN

Nation Has 'Means To Defend' Security

JN2307201192 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1903 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] New York, 23 Jul (INA)—Iraq's permanent UN representative, 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, said during a meeting he held last night with Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the Special Committee, that certain UN Security Council members view themselves as policemen of the world. They must understand that they will come to regret their violation of UN resolutions, he added.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in New York quotes Iraq's representative at the United Nations as emphasizing that Western threats and provocations will not do and that the West must understand that Iraq possesses the means to defend its security and sovereignty.

The parties that are seeking to escalate the situation against Iraq, counter to the cease-fire resolution, will be sorry when the consequences prove contrary to their expectations.

Ambassador al-Anbari noted that Iraq has extended every degree of cooperation to the inspection teams, emphasizing that they would not have fulfilled their mission if it were not for the cooperation of the government and people of Iraq.

Iraq has been positive and cooperative, and yet the land, sea, and air embargo is still in place and, as a consequence, the Iraqi people continue to suffer.

Iraq's UN delegate ridiculed the so-called alliance, saying that there is no alliance whatsoever other than the one grouping Britain, the United States, France, and some Arabian Gulf regimes. He added that the big loser from the anti-Iraq aggression has been the UN Charter and international law.

In his statements, al-Anbari indicated that the inspection team has not been hurt. However, Iraq will not allow its mosques, churches, and ministries to be inspected because such a thing impinges on national sovereignty, not to mention the fact that it is not part of the inspection teams' missions, he noted. He maintained that such a thing is categorically rejected.

The permanent Iraqi UN delegate pointed out that Iraq has thus far hosted 41 inspection teams, which spent approximately 400 days in Iraq and inspected everything. He affirmed that they cannot be deemed experts if they have not thus far accomplished their mission.

Al-Anbari said that Iraq cooperated positively with the inspection teams which visited Iraq and provided them with all possible facilities to enable them to accomplish their missions. However, there are limits pertaining to honor, common sense, and good faith, as no government could allow foreigners and aliens to inspect a minister's office because such an act shows a lack of respect and propriety.

Concluding his statements, 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari asserted that Iraq will not allow such things, which encroach on its sovereignty and dignity, to take place.

'Malicious' Acts by 'Scoundrel Agents'

JN2307180392 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Taha Yasin Ramadan, member of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and vice president, has affirmed that Iraq's adherence to the principles of freedom, progress, and justice prompted its enemies to intensify their conspiracies and acts of aggression against it, using all conceivable means of brutal aggression in failed bids to make it deviate from its humane and honorable principles.

During a meeting today with the comrade secretary and members of the Karbala' Branch Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, the comrade RCC member added: The glorious Iraqis will foil all the malicious media tactics and rumors propagated by the aggressors and their scoundrel agents. He affirmed that Iraqis trust their wise leadership and giant revolution, which removed the darkness of the past and replaced it with its glowing light through the achievements and accomplishments of the past 24 years.

Taha Yasin Ramadan indicated that the enemies have persisted in using exposed methods to undermine Iraq, noting that Iraqis are aware of the dimensions of these conspiratorial tactics, which only serve to further bolster their cohesion, unity, and rallying around their symbol, His Excellency President Saddam Husayn, the mujahid leader. Besides, these tactics will also prompt Iraqis to continue with their selfless work to tear up all chapters of the aggression, regardless of the numerous methods they could pursue and the magnitude they might assume.

The RCC member listened to a detailed explanation of the nature of the party organization and its sacred role during this phase, provided by the comrade secretary of the party branch, who affirmed that rallying around the leader is gaining momentum day in and day out. He explained the nature of ties existing between party organizations and the masses [words indistinct].

Taha Yasin Ramadan also met with the comrade secretaries and members of the commands of the al-Sumud and al-Husayn divisions, which are parts of the Karbala' Party Branch. The vice president paid tribute to the heroic stand demonstrated by the party organizations in the two divisions, and also to their heroic role in confronting the cliques of aggression and deception, which sought to hurt the Iraqis.

The two meetings were attended by comrade 'Abd-al-Rahman Ahmad, member of the Iraq Command and official in charge of the Central Euphrates organizations within the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party.

On the other hand, Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and vice president, visited the al-Husayniyah and al-'Abbasiyah shrines, where he read the opening chapter of the Koran to invoke God's mercy on the souls of Iraq's martyrs, who shed their blood to vindicate the Iraqis' dignity, freedom, and existence. He also prayed to Almighty God to protect Iraq's leader and people, and to grant them victory over the wrongful and malicious parties.

Karbala' Governor 'Abd-al-Khaliq 'Abd-al-'Aziz provided a detailed explanation of the nature of the work currently under way at the holy shrines. He also dwelt on the extreme care accorded to Karbala' Governorate in general, and its holy shrines in particular, to make them assume the picture they deserve.

Taha Yasin Ramadan was accompanied during the visit by comrade 'Abd-al-Rahman Ahmad, member of the Iraq Command and official in charge of the Euphrates organizations within the party.

'Massive Rally' Denounces 'Scoundrels'

JN2307185292 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The masses, along with professional and popular organizations, have continued to condemn and denounce the provocative practices carried out by the international inspection team scoundrels.

In protest marches through the streets surrounding the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the Sheraton Hotel, the masses and organizations affirmed that the deliberate practices of the international inspection team are deemed violations of international charters and norms.

The masses of the areas of al-Ma'mun, al-Shu'lah, Abu-Gharib, al-Hurriyah, al-Kazimiyah, al-Karradah, and al-Karkh condemned in their protest marches U.S. attempts to interfere in Iraq's domestic affairs, as well as the provocative practices aimed at promoting U.S. interests.

With regard to the peasant masses, they expressed, during a massive rally held today in front of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, their indignation and wrath over the team's provocative practices and shameful conduct, as well as over the burning of wheat and barley crops in the north of the homeland by U.S. and British aircraft.

In their chants and songs, the masses saluted the wise leadership of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn. They also paid tribute to his confrontation of U.S. imperialist-Zionist conspiracies, which target the pride and dignity of both Iraq and the Arab nation.

Press Stresses 'Irrevocable' Stand

JN2407100992 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0748 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Baghdad, 24 Jul (INA)—Two Iraqi papers have affirmed that all fabricated crises, enemy pressures, and attempts to blackmail Iraq will not change our principled and constant stand and will not undermine our strong will.

In two editorials today, the two Iraqi papers affirmed that Iraq's stand is based on legitimacy and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Iraqi people have taken their irrevocable national decision of not ceding dignity and sovereignty and not allowing inspection teams to interfere in their internal affairs.

The newspaper AL-THAWRAH affirms that the problem of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, which has been fabricated by the scoundrels of the international team, is only an exposed U.S. attempt to use UN agencies to insult Iraq, spy on it, and interfere in its internal affairs.

The paper says that it is not a coincidence that these and previous attempts were led by Americans affiliated with the U.S. Army Intelligence. David Kay, Karen Jansen, and Mark Silver are U.S. intelligence officers and agents. On the basis of this, Iraq is entitled to refuse inspection of the Agriculture Ministry.

The paper indicates that Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz revealed a host of important facts which explain the large scope of the inspection teams' activities in Iraq since the cease-fire. He said that these activities affirm that there is nothing banned in Iraq and that Iraq has been greatly cooperative with them.

The paper says: Despite all that, proved and documented events affirm that the Special Committee insists on continuing the unjust blockade against Iraq, interfering in its internal affairs, and seizing its national decision-making without any justification.

The paper asks: Why has all this happened despite Iraq's cooperation? This is because the U.S. and British administrations seek to destabilize Iraq in accordance with their aggressive designs. Criminal Bush and his servant Major make public statements to that effect.

The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH reveals the aim of the Western media's instigation of public opinion against Iraq. It says that these media are instructed by Washington to fabricate occasional flimsy pretexts and excuses to justify the continued inequitable blockade and to insult Iraq.

The paper says that the hostile media are trying to propagate a poisonous policy against Iraq to conceal the facts revealed by the Mother of Battles and to cover the lies of criminal Bush and his allies in order to terrorize the Iraqis and affect them psychologically.

The paper adds that criminal Bush's fabrications with regard to the false international legitimacy and inspection teams is an abortive attempt to rally support for his [word indistinct] election campaign and to appease Zionism.

The paper stresses that the West's policy, which is run by Bush's intelligence services, can no longer conceal [word indistinct] and the Iraqis' steadfastness and (?creativity) by claiming that Iraq has obstructed the "UN Security Council's" efforts and objected to its resolutions which seek to subjugate Iraq.

The paper explains that all these vicious means, propaganda, and subjugation of the United Nations to U.S. colonialist objectives clearly shows to what extent Bush and his administration are panicked and worried by Iraq's gigantic rise from the debris of the war and its evoking of a new glory.

The paper says that the unambiguous dirty game played by the Bush administration and his mass media reveals the Western malice against Iraq and a persistence in torturing the Iraqi people.

Foreign Minister Protests U-2 Flights

JN2307145092 Baghdad INA in English 1220 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] New York, July 23, INA—Iraq has strongly denounced violation of the American spying plane U-2 of the Iraqi space repeatedly under pretext of carrying out an air survey for the U.N. Special Committee.

Iraqi foreign minister has mentioned in a letter yesterday sent to the U.N. Secretary-General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali that the American spying plane U-2 has on July 13 violated the Iraqi space coming from its base in the Saudi territories and covered in its flight large areas in central and northern Iraq for three-hours and 40 minutes after which left the Iraqi space towards the Saudi territories.

The minister has also said that the American spying plane has also violated the Iraqi air space on the 15th of this month, also coming from the Saudi territories and covered in its flight large areas in the middle and south of Iraq for three hours and 55 minutes after which left the Iraqi air space towards its base in the Saudi territories.

On July 18 while the Iraqi people was celebrating its national day the said plane has violated the Iraqi air space again flying over large areas in the middle and north of Iraq for four and half hours and then left the Iraqi air space towards it base in Saudia.

The minister has pointed out in his message that these three violations have raised the number of violations of the U.S. spying plane to 66.

He has also said that violations of this plane constitute provocation and challenge to the Iraqis feelings while they are living their dearest national occasion and confirmed that certain parties at the Security Council insist on violating Iraq's sovereignty and challenging the feeling of its people.

The minister has stressed in his letter Iraq's attitude continually expressed that his plane is used to purposes contrary to those defined by the Security Council and that its activity impinges on Iraq's sovereignty and security.

PUK's Talabani Leaves for Talks in U.S.

NC2307175492 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1705 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] At the official invitation of the U.S. Government, brother struggler Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], left Kurdistan on 22 July on his way to the United States via Turkey. Talabani was seen off in Shaqlawah by the PUK Political Bureau members and other officials.

Talabani arrived today in Ankara, where he is expected to meet with Turkish President Turgut Ozal. He will then depart for the United States, where he will meet with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and other U.S. officials. During these meetings, they will discuss the situation in Iraq in general and the situation in Kurdistan in particular.

SAIRI Leader—'Method' of Dealing With Regime

NC2307203192 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1325 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] The newspaper BADR [Full Moon], affiliated with the Publishing Center of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], has interviewed SAIRI leader His Eminence Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, may God preserve him and bless him with victory.

According to BADR, Ayatollah al-Hakim answered a question about whether his eminence focuses on military action in his political consultations. His eminence said that his political efforts have been very successful. We succeeded in clarifying the situation inside Iraq and presenting our views on various domestic matters, including the issue of jihad, he added.

His eminence pointed out that the jihad issue, performance, goals, and principles, previously obscure to others, are now well understood.

The SAIRI leader told BADR that the method in which we should deal with the Saddamist regime is now clear to everyone. This method relies on mobilizing the nation

politically and with regard to jihad rather than on foreign intervention or military coups. Meanwhile, he added, we should take into account the role that the Iraqi Army plays by the virtue of its being a part of our people.

Concerning the problem of the border with Kuwait, the leader of the Iraqi opposition told BADR that this problem became complicated because Saddam's regime refuses to recognize the existence of a country named Kuwait.

Further Reportage on Construction Freeze Plan

Ministers Hold Press Conference

TA2307101292 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0855 GMT 23 Jul 92

[News conference by Finance Minister Avraham Shohat and Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer at the Finance Ministry in Jerusalem—live; broadcast in progress]

[Excerpt] [Shohat] ...connected with the canceling or nonsigning of contracts and the nonimplementation of construction in Judaea and Samaria, as well as in other parts of the country. We estimate that we currently have a large stock of apartments, as evidenced by the fact that the government has to buy tens of thousands of apartments as part of its purchase commitments. In other words, there is no demand for apartments in certain areas where part of the construction was carried out, and the financial burden on the state budget is huge. If we implement the entire 1992 program and build the remainder of the apartments from 1991 which still have not been constructed, we may reach a situation in which the entire 1993 budget is mortgaged to finance purchase commitments reaching a scope of billions of shekels. If this is how things turn out, then we will not be able to implement the change in the national order of priorities we have promulgated. We will not be able to invest in infrastructure and in the creation of jobs. We will not be able to invest in those social services we wish to strengthen to the best of our ability.

Therefore, we must adopt a very brave decision that perhaps may seem even a bit harsh, but this decision is a rational one, in both the economic sense and clearly also in terms of its political significance with reference to Judaea and Samaria. We have said that we will not expand construction in areas where we consider that construction to be politically motivated, therefore we will not implement construction plans there, and we even are halting the building of housing units for which contracts have been signed already, but the work not yet begun. The construction and housing minister will explain all this in more detail later.

I would like to reiterate that the State of Israel must change its order of priorities if it seeks to confront our real problem, which is unemployment and the collapse of aliyah due to employment problems. Without changing priorities regarding the allocation of resources, we will be unable to achieve this. I know that construction and housing....[changes thought] Nobody can teach me anything about this issue or how important it is. I heard Knesset Member [MK] Ari'el Sharon talking this morning about the Negev vision. No one can teach me about the Negev and what should or should not be done there. I devoted my entire adult life to building the Negev, but I also can understand that if 2,000 housing units are standing empty in some settlement, it makes no sense to continue building there because there is no demand and the government merely squanders its money by purchasing these apartments. It is better to divert resources and say that in the next few years we will invest money in roads, in creating jobs, and in the various social areas that we believe need improvement. Everything I heard MK Sharon say this morning was sheer demagoguery and had nothing to do with real national priorities.

I would like to say a few words about what we decided regarding the issue of roads in Judaea and Samaria. These decisions are very sweeping and significant. Incidentally, most of them relate to those roads that were extorted from the previous government by the Tehiya party on the night the budget was approved. I assume you all remember that when the state budget was presented, it did not include such comprehensive road construction in Judaea and Samaria. At the time, the Tehiya was able to exert pressure because it was the deciding factor in getting the budget approved. That night, tens of millions of shekels were diverted from the road budget inside the Green Line, as submitted in the original proposal, to roads in Judaea and Samaria.

Now, to which roads are we referring and what did we decide? The Tulkarm bypass road: The total cost of this road was 35 million shekels, of which 16 million shekels worth of work has been carried out already. This road will not be finished, barring a decision to settle Avney Hefetz. If such a decision is made, the road will be completed up to Avney Hefetz. Three roads currently under construction will be completed in full. These are the Levona bypass, the Bet Horon bypass, and the Bani Na'im road. These roads are almost finished. The Nablus bypass: This is a very large road the total cost of which is estimated at 60 million shekels. Up to now, only 7 million shekels worth has been completed and 53 million remains. No additional funds will be allocated for this purpose. The new Trans-Samaria highway, which costs 60 million shekels, will not be constructed. There are several bypass roads: Nahli'el-Talmon, Bet Hagay-Manoah, Susya-Sammu', the Yattah bypass, etc. There are about eight or nine roads on which regional councils began work. The Construction and Housing Ministry will halt all work immediately. These decisions correspond with both the true requirements of the state budget and the viewpoint that such large funds should not be invested in Judaea and Samaria. Most of these roads are political ones that serve no other purpose.

I would like to say that this decision will not impact on this year's budget because what was decided on this year has been carried out already. The significance is for next year's budget and that of the coming years because clearly there was no intention to complete these roads within one year. This is absolutely clear. These are very large projects, but many tens of millions of shekels would have been allocated to this next year, as well as in the coming years. We will halt the building of these roads, which owe their existence to aggressive political pressure on the government. So the present government, which has changed the order of priorities, must come and state

that we have to stop them and invest the money from these roads to resolve our country's real problems, such as transportation. I have no doubt that when the budget proposal is presented, you will see that the budget for road infrastructure next year will be much greater than it was this year. The true significance of the diversion of resources is reflected clearly in our decisions of today. I give the floor to Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] Good day. First of all, our discussion was held in a very constructive atmosphere. I am saying this because, to my chagrin, we woke up this morning to various reports about data inconsistencies in the Construction and Housing Ministry. I must say that the figures that were presented at this table and which served as the basis for discussion were prepared by the Construction and Housing Ministry staff. To the best of my understanding, and in light of our constructive meeting, there were no disagreements regarding the data.

Second, I would like to start, not with what we are halting, but with what will be continued. Let me state that current construction in Judaea and Samaria, in the areas where housing starts are in various stages of construction, in other words 8,781 housing units, will not be stopped. Just for your information, we have not touched and have no intention of touching the greater Jerusalem area, which includes the area of Ma'ale Adumim, Efrat, Betar, and Ma'ale Efrayim. Construction there continues as planned, and approximately 1,686 housing units are scheduled to be built there.

What are we going to halt? We are going to halt work on 3,136 unsigned contracts. These will not be signed. I am referring to areas in Judaea and Samaria. The second number is 3,545 housing units in Judaea and Samaria for which contracts already have been signed but construction not begun. In other words, the total of these two figures—approximately 6,880 housing units—is the number of housing units we are halting immediately.

In light of all kinds of media reports, I would like to clarify again that purchases will continue. We are not going to stop any purchases from today, certainly not with regard to those projects that are in various stages of construction. Regrettably, I also have heard reports about foreign companies. This issue still is being discussed, and no decisions have been made.

As for the continuation of building in Israel, I would like to enlarge on the finance minister's statements. We reached a decision today regarding approximately 3,000 housing units that were part of the program for continued construction throughout the entire country—excluding Judaea and Samaria—the construction of which we decided to halt. A large proportion of this, I would even say the greater part of this number, relates to those sites on which there is agreement, but still no signed contracts.

I think that, in principle, I should underscore those statements previously made by the finance minister. Without making these decisions, this government cannot implement the goals that constitute its guidelines and strengthen Israel by means of a new order of priorities that calls for upgrading the infrastructure and resolving the problems of 250,000 unemployed people and of young couples and underprivileged neighborhoods. I thank you all very much.

[Shohat] Before beginning the question-and-answer session, I would like to add a few words on important decisions that have a significant bearing on this matter. One decision is that if the contractors who were supposed to receive the work will absolve us of our purchase commitments and start building within the State of Israel, we will issue no objection because if we are released from our purchase commitments, the state budget will be released from a huge burden. In other words, they will be able to build in areas where there is a demand for apartments and continue construction on condition that they absolve the government of its commitment to purchase their apartments. We then will not consider this an economic problem.

[Unidentified correspondent] A question to the finance minister: How will you compensate the builders whose contracts will be canceled?

[Shohat] The Finance Ministry and Construction and Housing Ministry legal advisers will deal with this. There are different estimates regarding the amount of compensation. In some cases, they are stipulated in the contracts; in others, negotiations are required. I believe that this will be done in due course. I also assume and hope that compensation for a contract on which work has not yet begun will be low.

[HADASHOT correspondent Avi Temkin] Will construction work be stopped absolutely?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] My instructions are clear. We have no intention of stopping construction work that has begun already. We preferred to deal with the issue of unsigned contracts, as I said before. The other aspect is that of contracts that have been signed but on which no work has begun, no foundation or frame built. [passage indistinct]

[Shohat] I would like to add three points to the housing minister's reply: Regarding the aspect of quantity, assuming that the budget for a purchase commitment for an apartment stands at nearly 150,000 shekels and assuming that all those apartments will not sell—which is not a correct assumption—then 9,000 times 150,000 is 1.350 billion shekels. Because I believe that some of the apartments will be sold, I speak of approximately 1 billion shekels. Second: The housing minister referred to Betar, Efrat, and other such places where there is no problem because we can attain a zero purchase commitment. Houses there have been sold and the government's responsibility is very low. Third and last: We discussed two aspects today: planned construction for which no contracts have been signed and contracts that have been signed but no work has been started. The housing minister and I will continue discussing the policy of the

Construction and Housing Ministry. We will continue debating such issues as foundations and the like. A debate will be set for next week. What we have reported are the decisions we made today.

[Israel Television correspondent 'Oded Shahar] Is there a possibility that next week you will decide to freeze the construction of apartments on which work on the foundations already is in progress?

[Shohat] We are conducting a general discussion of the construction situation, the reserves, and the needs. The discussion will be held next week, and I believe it is possible that the issue of apartments at a very initial stage of construction will be broached. We did not deal with this today.

[Shahar] How will you invest the billion shekels that will be freed?

[Shohat] As I said, the money will not be available this year. In fact, because purchase commitments were made, they will be a budgetary burden in 1993 and 1994. We have said that among this government's priorities is making large investments in infrastructure, with the aim of and under the assumption that in time this will accelerate economic growth. This will not happen in a moment. We believe that more investment must be made in creating workplaces. As I said before, we will not avoid dealing with certain aspects of Israeli society which call for certain investments that were rejected in the past. I will not elaborate on this because nothing has been decided yet.

[Shahar] Will such decisions not cause an economic slowdown, a recession?

[Shohat] No. Giving a boost to the economy through the construction sector, as we all know, yields only temporary results and makes no real contribution. If the apartments really are needed, that is a different story; we must meet that need, but a decision to boost the economy and expand productivity through the construction of apartments no one needs, while wasting budgetary resources, would be very wrong.

[Shahar] Can the decisions made here today be called the Ben-Eli'ezer decrees?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] No, I believe they are not, and I regret the coining of the term. These are decisions, not decrees. The guidelines of the current government call for them. This government spoke of two main goals: 1. The issue of a new order of social priorities; 2. Enhancing the political process. I believe the decisions presented here today are the outcome that is called for.

[Unidentified correspondent] Did you take into account the possibility of a very harsh reaction from the settlers in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I have taken every possible reaction into account. Let me tell you that I know the settlers. I spent some time in the territories, and I know that the vast majority of the settlers are responsible people who, I believe, are able to evaluate the situation rationally. I will not refer to those people who naturally will try to drag this large public into riots. I expect that they will make some noise, but there will be no riots.

[Shohat] I would like to add something regarding the political aspect. There is no basis to the charge often leveled at the construction and housing minister, and at the government in general, that what we are doing here is aimed at pleasing someone overseas. In my view and that of Mr. Ben-Eli'ezer, these decisions had to be made independently of the issue of loan guarantees. There was a single consideration: The good of the State of Israel and the proper order of priorities. The proof of this is the fact that in addition to cuts in Judaea and Samaria, we also are making cuts in other places where we believe no additional construction is needed and where we need to save on expenses. [passage omitted] [radio discontinues live relay of press conference]

Shamir, Others React to Freeze Plan

TA2307130692 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1230 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Reactions from the opposition to the government's decision to freeze building contracts in the territories continue to stream in.

It is a nightmare; the freeze on settlement is tantamount to ceding those regions where settlements were scheduled to be built, former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir told our correspondent, 'Adi Talmor. The decision represents a one-sided concession, without any negotiation, on the part of Israel and a dangerous abandonment of parts of Eretz Yisra'el, he said. Shamir sharply attacked the Rabin government, saying the about-face in the last elections is a tragedy for the Israeli people.

Likud Knesset Member [MK] Yehoshu'a Matza, chairman of the Knesset Interior Committee, has said that the decision of the finance and construction ministers to freeze the building of bypass roads in Judaea and Samaria means that the lives of the settlers have been placed at the mercy of Arab terror. Matza said these roads were meant to spare Israelis from driving through a hostile Arab population. Human lives are being put in danger, and the people responsible are the finance and construction ministers, Matza said.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT at 23 July adds: "The Eretz Yisra'el Front in the Knesset has lashed out at the decision of the finance minister and the construction and housing minister to freeze construction in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. MK Mikha'el Eytan, the front's chairman, told our correspondent, Hayim Hecht, that the biggest mistake of all is to freeze work on the new trans-Samaria road. He said many accidents have occurred on the old road where traffic is heavy, whereas the new road is of utmost security-operational importance. Many Jewish settlements are located along it, and the freeze on access to them is a tangible manifestation

of the plans to dry them up, Eytan said. MK's Eytan and Ron Nahman have applied to the police for a permit to stage a demonstration this afternoon at the Qesem junction in Samaria to protest the freeze on settlement.

["The inhabitants of Qiryat Arba' have set up an action committee to fight the construction minister's decision to halt the sale of apartments built by the Shikun Ufituah company in the town. The committee members say they will recruit supporters abroad and will build apartments themselves. The action committee sent a letter to the town's residents stating that Qiryat Arba' and Hebron soon will double their number of residents.

["Peace Now members told our correspondent, Gil Litman, that the decision to complete the construction of over 8,000 apartments in the territories will bring another 50,000 people to the settlements and will cost 1 billion shekels."]

Data on Starts in Jerusalem Cited

TA2207182092 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Jul 92 P A4

[Report by Yerah Tal]

[Excerpts] The issue of construction in Jerusalem was raised during the meetings between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, and their aides. While Rabin spoke of greater Jerusalem, which also includes neighborhoods and settlements such as Giv'at Ze'ev, Ma'ale Adumim, and Efrat, the U.S. officials expressed opposition to increasing construction in these areas but agreed to turn a blind eye to construction in the northern neighborhoods and the eastern part of the city. [passage omitted]

From a study of Construction and Housing Ministry data one learns that approximately 7,000 housing units are currently under construction in those Jerusalem suburbs that were annexed after the Six Day War and in Jerusalem's satellite towns beyond the Green Line. An additional 10,000 new housing units are planned. In the Gilo neighborhood, 146 apartments are currently being built, with 139 under construction in Ramot, 3,987 in Pisgat Ze'ev, 606 in Neve Ya'aqov, 67 in East Talpiyyot, and 16 housing units in other neighborhoods.

In total, 4,961 housing units are in various stages of construction in the suburbs annexed to Jerusalem. In addition, there are plans to establish 4,500 apartments in Har Homa, 2,100 apartments in Rekhes Shu'fat, 250 in an ultraorthodox neighborhood in the Old City, 200 apartments in Armon Hanetziv, 500 on French Hill, and another 400 on Ramat Eshkol, Giv'at Hamivtar, Ma'alot Dafna, and Greater Sanhedriya.

In addition, massive construction is planned and also being carried out in Jerusalem's satellite towns, which are part of greater Jerusalem according to Rabin's conception. There will probably be no construction freeze in these areas. Nine hundred and forty-two housing units are currently being built in Ma'ale Adumim and another 1,000 are scheduled for construction in the near future. In the ultraorthodox town of Betar, which is situated south of Jerusalem, 380 housing units are under construction and another 1,000 are scheduled to be built soon. Efrat will soon have another 318 apartments, which are currently being prepared, and there are plans to add approximately another 1,500.

This building is the result of the Shamir government's decision from 14 October 1991. At the time, the government decided to accelerate the rate of construction in the Jewish neighborhoods of East Jerusalem to 5,000 housing units each year, instead of the 2,000 apartments established in each of the previous years. At this meeting, the cabinet decided to give Jerusalem the status of a class "A" development zone. [passage omitted]

Thus, for example, the construction rate in Pisgat Ze'ev, north of Jerusalem, was only stepped up after Bush refused to make a distinction between East Jerusalem and the territories. Approximately 120,000 people, over 30 percent of Jerusalem's Jewish residents, now live in the part of the city that was annexed to Israel 18 days after the end of the Six Day War—to the south, east, and north of the old jurisdiction boundaries.

Jerusalem has tripled the size of its municipal jurisdiction area from 38,000 dunams to approximately 110,000 dunams. About 17,000 dunams were expropriated on the initiative of Labor governments, on which a series of new suburbs were built in the 1970's, thus defining the new perimeters of the city's municipal jurisdiction. If the current rate of construction is sustained, and the projected settling of 60,000 new immigrants in the eastern part of the city over the next few years is implemented, then this part of the city will have a Jewish majority in about three years. Today the Arabs, with 140,000 residents, constitute 55 percent of the population in the eastern part of the city as opposed to the Jews, who with 120,000 residents, only constitute 45 percent of the populace.

However, while the Labor Party's policy opts for continued building in Jerusalem's new suburbs and satellite towns, the Rabin government will probably completely stop financing the purchase of houses in the heart of the Muslim Quarter and Silwan. The government will also freeze the plan, which was promoted by the previous construction and housing minister despite the opposition of the Jerusalem municipality, to build 200 apartments between the walls near Herod's Gate.

The Israeli policy in the territories annexed to Jerusalem was mainly based on the decision made by the ministerial committee for Jerusalem affairs, which considered the preservation of the existing ratio between Jews and Arabs in unified Jerusalem—approximately 78 percent Jews to 22 percent Arabs—to be a national priority. Since the unification of the city and until the end of 1990, approximately 72,000 housing units were built.

Out of the total scope of construction work in the city, the Arab sector was involved in only 12 percent, out of which 82 was residential housing and 6 percent public buildings. [passage omitted]

Out of regard for international sensibilities, Israel has so far refrained from annexing additional parts of the West Bank to Jerusalem. This is also the reason that when a governmental committee, headed by former Interior Ministry Director General Hayim Kubersky, was assigned the task of setting the limits of Jerusalem's municipal jurisdiction, the government only gave it a mandate to operate inside the Green Line. The committee, in fact, recommended to annex territories to the west and southwest of Jerusalem and place them under the city's jurisdiction. All the committee's recommendations were accepted except for the call to annex Mevasseret Ziyyon, which was rejected by the interior minister.

However, the recommendations and plans to expand the city's jurisdiction eastwards were still on the agenda. In reality, this is taking place within the context of widespread construction plans for what is defined as greater Jerusalem. The ring of construction around Jerusalem is continuously widening. Former Construction Minister Ari'el Sharon even festively announced when Ma'ale Adumim was declared a city that if Jerusalem's jurisdiction was not expanded eastwards, then Ma'ale Adumim's jurisdiction would be expanded to the west. Sharon added that construction would increase until the houses on the west side of Ma'ale Adumim would adjoin the outlying houses of Jerusalem's northeastern suburbs.

The blueprint that was authorized for Ma'ale Adumim does indeed expand the city's construction limits to the borders of Jerusalem's municipal jurisdiction. This was supposed to create a contiguity of Jewish settlements from Jerusalem eastwards. According to the previous government's plans, this building was supposed to expand all the way to the Dead Sea. This was meant to establish a buffer zone of Jewish settlements that would cut across the entire West Bank. In any event, the Rabin government will continue to build in the area known as greater Jerusalem, and the U.S. satellites will keep on taking photographs of many more housing starts in these areas.

Reportage: Palestinian Discussions With PLO

Two Negotiators Barred From Leaving

TA2307173592 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The Israeli authorities today barred Ahmad Shraym and Hisam Abu-Bakr, members of the Palestinian team to the peace talks, from traveling to Amman via the Allenby Bridge. The two were among seven team members, headed by Dr. Sari Nusaybah, who were intending to take part in Palestinian political consultations in Jordan. The other members of the delegation decided to return to Jerusalem and cancel the visit in solidarity with their colleagues.

The Palestinian team to the peace conference issued a statement in which they condemned the decision barring the two team members from leaving for Jordan and called on the Israeli Government to allow all members of the Palestinian team to travel abroad freely.

Meeting With PLO To Be Held in Tunisia

TA2307175092 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem has learned that a delegation of Israeli Arab figures will leave the country tomorrow morning heading for Carthage in Tunisia. The delegation includes Knesset member Hashim Mahamid, Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, the writer Salim Jubran, Ahmad Darwish, Kafr Manda local council head Muhammad Zaydan, and attorney Usamah Sa'di. The delegation members will meet in Tunisia with PLO officials. The delegation is to make a stopover in Cairo to meet with a number of Egyptian officials, including Dr. Usamah al-Baz, President Mubarak's political affairs adviser.

Russian Envoy to Syria Delivers Message

TA2407085492 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 24 Jul 92 p A1

[Report by 'Aqiva Eldar]

[Text] Russian Ambassador in Damascus Aleksandr Zotov visited Israel for a few hours yesterday and relayed a message to the political level concerning Syria's position on the peace process.

Zotov arrived in Israel by car after crossing the Syrian border. The official explanation given for his visit is that he came to tour the Christian holy sites. This is the first time that a high-level Russian diplomat has come to Israel from Syria with a message for the Israeli Government. Russia has recently joined the U.S. efforts to bring the Israeli and Syrian positions closer, in a bid to promote direct negotiations between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres stated last night that the Arab countries, particularly Syria, are very worried about the reported erosion in President George Bush's standing. According to him, the Arabs want very much to attain a real achievement in the talks with Israel within the next few months, while President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker are still in power.

According to Peres, the Arabs fear that if a Democrat is elected, he will not be as committed as the current administration to the promotion of peace arrangements in the Middle East. Peres is convinced that Syria will join the multilateral talks, including the arms control and regional security committee. He said that the Israeli Government has not yet exhausted its creative skills with regard to the formulation of proposals for arrangements on the Golan Heights.

According to the foreign minister, Syria, under certain conditions, would be willing to sign a full peace treaty with Israel that would include open borders and diplomatic relations. He believes that the number of housing units in the territories whose construction will be frozen does not matter all that much. He said the Americans estimated that the freeze would apply to 5,500 housing starts, and if the number is a few thousand higher, this is not all that important.

Peres said that the Americans agreed to stop mentioning a building freeze in Jerusalem and noted that this will make it easier to reach an arrangement about a settlement freeze. Peres played down the importance of differences over administrative issues, such as the split of the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The foreign minister said Baker had told him that claims that the United States objects to assigning a significant role to the EC in the multilateral talks are totally unfounded.

According to him, the Israeli Government will drop its objection to the inclusion of Europe in the arms control committee, because there is no sense in disarmament arrangements that exclude the EC, one of the Arab countries' main arms suppliers. Peres said that from his talks with the U.S. secretary of state, he gathered that Baker is going to run Bush's election campaign because he believes that the battle with the Democrats is not lost and that Bush's chances are still quite good.

First Military Attache Section Opens in Warsaw

TA2007045192 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 20 Jul 92

[Text] Israel has opened its first military attache section in Warsaw. The decision was taken during the visit earlier this year to Poland by the chief of staff, Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq. It marks the first military attache section opened by Israel in a former Warsaw pact state.

New Austrian Ambassador Presents Credentials

TA2307182392 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1000 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Excerpt] The new Austrian ambassador presented his credentials this morning to President Hayim Herzog, after a six-year period in which Israel refused to have an ambassador in Vienna or an Austrian ambassador in Israel. This was due to the election of Kurt Waldheim as president, in spite of having lied about his wartime past. Foreign Minister Peres said the end of the Waldheim period marks a new era of good relations between Jerusalem and Vienna. At the presidential residence was reporter Jack Katzenell:

[Begin recording] The Austrian national anthem played for the first time in six years at the presidential residence in Jerusalem, as a guard of honor from the Border Police presents arms. The new ambassador, Kurt Hengel, told us later Austria has adopted a law making it a crime to deny the Nazi Holocaust, whether for ideological reasons—as in the case of the neo-Nazis, or in a pseudo-scientific guise—as in the case of the revisionist historians. [passage omitted]

German Law Bans Adherence to Arab Boycott

TA2207162992 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] Israel's ambassador in Bonn was handed an announcement this morning stating that Germany had adopted a law which bans German companies from including in commercial contracts clauses which contain a surrender or agreement to the Arab boycott. Our political correspondent reports that German Economic Affairs Minister Juergen Moellemann handed this announcement to Israeli Ambassador Binyamin Navon.

Nuclear Scientist Goes to Iran for Lack of Job

AU2007104792 Hamburg DER SPIEGEL in German 20 Jul 92 p 117

[Text] Israel is worried about the departure of a nuclear scientist to Iran. One and a half years ago the 45-year-old man emigrated with his Jewish wife from the USSR and did not find an appropriate job in his new home. The nuclear expert was working as a street cleaner in Beersheba when former colleagues from Alma Ata approached him and persuaded him to move to Tehran. A complete research team from Kazakhstan is reportedly working there. In Israel only 12 of 40 nuclear experts from the former USSR have found appropriate jobs: The demand is limited; in addition, strict security regulations—in particular for non-Jews—make it more difficult to get a job. Almost half of the 7,000 highly qualified scientists who have emigrated from the area of the former USSR since 1989, are unemployed. Other intellectuals must make do with odd jobs.

Air Force Planes Raid Hizballah Targets

TA2407091292 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Earlier today, Israel Air Force planes once again attacked Hizballah targets in Jabal Safi in southern Lebanon. This was announced by the Israeli Army spokesman, who added that the targets were hit and all our planes returned safely.

Beirut radio stations reported that the Air Force raided targets southeast of Sidon. This is the second Air Force raid in the area within the last 24 hours.

Rabin Anticipates Acceleration of Peace Process

TA2407044892 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin says that the foundations have been laid for finding a solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict, and he expects the peace process to

be speeded up. Referring to the visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Baker, Rabin said no miracles could be expected two to three days after his visit. The prime minister was speaking at a reception held by the Egyptian Embassy, marking the 40th anniversary of the revolution which toppled King Faruq.

The reception was the largest in years. Egypt's Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni said Prime Minister Rabin's visit to Cairo has opened the way for better understanding between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres told a Qol Yisra'el reporter that the radical declarations by Arab states were intended for internal consumption.

Also attending the reception was former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir.

Gaza Laborers' Age Restriction Remains in Force

TA2207164792 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Jul 92 p A5

[Report by military correspondent Eytan Rabin]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] The defense establishment has decided not to lift the age restriction imposed on Gaza laborers leaving for work in Israel. The decision stipulates that the order banning youths under 20 from leaving for work in Israel continues to be in force. A senior military source explained that data collected in recent months indicate that most of the terrorist acts and stabbing incidents were carried out by terrorists whose age was under 20. [passage omitted]

A series of incidents took place in the territories yesterday. Palestinian sources reported the injury of seven Gaza Strip residents, including three in Gaza, two in Khan Yunus, and two in the Jabalyah refugee camp. Additional incidents, involving stoning, occurred in the Gaza Strip refugee camps. Still, a representative of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman in the Southern Command announced that no incidents were recorded in the Gaza Strip.

It was reported from the West Bank that a Molotov cocktail was thrown at a police vehicle near the Nabulus police. The bottle shattered and ignited on the door of the vehicle. Slight damage was caused to the door, but there were no casualties.

It was also reported that stones were thrown yesterday afternoon at an Israeli bus which was travelling by the village of Nahalin in the Bethlehem District. A female passenger was slightly injured, treated by a physician on the spot, and sent home.

Black Panthers Leader Killed by Border Police

TA2307054192 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] In Janin in Samaria last night, a Palestinian gunman was killed in a clash with a Border Police unit. The unit was on a special operation and encountered three members of the Black Panther organization, which is tied to PLO Fatah. The Panthers opened fire and the Border Police returned the shots, killing one of the three. The two others escaped. None of the security men were hurt. The Army closed off the area and launched a search.

The dead man has been identified as Mahmud Abu-Hasan, known as Zarini, the head of the Black Panthers in Janin. Abu-Hasan had been sought by the security forces for three years on suspicion of murdering Palestinians believed to have cooperated with Israel and of attacking security forces in Janin. Near his body the Border Police found a gun, ammunition, and a grenade.

Assailants fired automatic weapons at a civilian Israeli car traveling near Kibbutz Merav in the Gilboa' last night. No one was hurt. The incident occurred at about 9 o'clock. Police began widespread searches and set up roadblocks. They arrested two suspects. During the searches they also discovered 10 knapsacks with light weapons inside. Those traveling in the car—two adults and five children from Kibbutz Merav—said they saw nothing; instead, they said they reacted by driving back to the kibbutz as fast as possible to alert the authorities.

Shots were fired last night at an Army patrol in Rafah in the Gaza Strip. No one was injured. Soldiers searched the area.

In another incident in the Gaza Strip, two petrol bombs were thrown at greenhouses belonging to residents of Kfar Darom settlement, damaging them slightly. Shots were also fired at an Army outpost in Kafr Idnah, south of Hebron. No one was injured. The Army closed the area.

Police have decided to bar Kakh activist Tiran Polak from carrying his Army-issued gun within the Green Line. The decision was made following an incident earlier this week in which Polak cocked his gun outside the al-Hakawati Theater in East Jerusalem during a press conference of Palestinian leaders. Polak was detained following the incident, and his remand was extended by two days yesterday. The Kakh activist is a resident of Hebron.

IDF Commander Releases Data on Wanted Men

TA2307120292 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1000 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Excerpts] Brigadier General Moshe Ya'alon, commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in Judaea and Samaria, stated today that one-third of the men wanted in the territories a year ago remain on the loose today. This morning, two wanted members of the Black Panthers terrorist squad turned themselves in to the security forces. Our correspondent in the territories Udi Segal reports:

[Begin recording] [Segal] Two wanted members of the Black Panthers squad turned themselves in this morning in the Janin area. This may be the first reaction to last night's incident in which a Border Police special unit killed the squad's commander. Brig. Gen. Ya'alon said

this was yet another operation within the IDF's aggressive policy against the wanted men.

[Ya'alon] Two wanted men turned themselves in this morning. I have not yet had time to ask them whether this came as a result of last night's incident or otherwise; this may or may not be the reason. In any event, the phenomenon of wanted men turning themselves in is a fact. Several wanted men turn themselves in every week, and this has already become a phenomenon. I believe this phenomenon will only grow. [passage omitted]

If at the beginning of the year we were talking about several hundred wanted men, today—as a result of our successful operations—we are talking about several dozen. All in all, today I am talking about one-third of the wanted men we had at the beginning of the year. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Palestinians Warned Against Excessive Optimism

TA2207182292 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] The political committees in the territories issued a statement today in which they warned against excessive optimism in assessing the chances of a political settlement. This, in order to prevent confusion among the residents of the territories. The statement said that the current peace process will require a long time.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the statement was issued at the end of the meeting of the political committees higher committee, headed by Dr. Sari Nusaybah. It was also announced that journalist Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir was appointed as the political committees' media spokesman.

Agriculture Minister To Aid Gaza Exports to EC

TA2307135992 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Jul 92 p C10

[Report by Avi Gan'or]

[Text] The Israeli market cannot be opened for Gaza Strip agriculture produce; however, we must make it easier on Gaza farmers to trade with Europe. These remarks were made yesterday by Agriculture Minister Ya'aqov Tzur in a meeting he held with representatives of Arab farmers from the Gaza Strip.

The minister also said that the farmers' allegations regarding administrative difficulties they encounter when they arrive to settle export permits in the ports have to be examined thoroughly.

Minister Tzur said that if peace were established in the Middle East, it would allow steps toward the establishment of a Middle Eastern common market, which would open new opportunities for Arab farmers as well.

The Gaza Strip farmers asked the minister to assist in the delivery of produce from the strip to Israeli and West Bank markets. They claimed that some 25 percent of the strip population earns its living from farming.

Currently there are 5,000 dunams of hot houses, 7,000 "tunnels" (where produce is grown under plastic covers), and some 15,000 dunams of open farm land.

The farmers claimed that although Israel has helped them attain certain things, at present they are facing serious marketing problems, which the intifadah has exacerbated. Some of the agricultural produce eventually reaches European markets, but most of it reaches the West Bank and Israeli open markets.

SHAS Names Deputy Ministers; Rift With UTJ

TA2307075892 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] Council of Torah Scholars convened last night, after a long time of inactivity, and named the SHAS deputy ministers. Reporting on the decision and what it means—a final break with the United Torah Jewry [UTJ] and spiritual leader Rabbi Schach—is our correspondent Sheli Yehimovich:

The Council of Torah Scholars has had several uneasy days, marked by heavy pressure and threats. SHAS Knesset members were not the only ones in the line of fire. The council was afraid to convene, because an official convention would have forced those of its members faithful to Rabbi Schach to quit. Last night it became apparent that the damage is not all that bad. Rabbi Shim'on Bahdani was the only one to quit the council.

This is what the council decided last night: Rabbi Moshe Maya will be deputy education minister; Arye Gamli'el was named deputy construction and housing minister; and Refa'el Pinhasi will be deputy finance minister.

SHAS has thus finally seized hold of the juicy portion it was allocated in the coalition agreement. Rabbi Schach went to great lengths to get SHAS to forgo this allotment. As long as the distribution of portfolios was being held up, the ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazi Jews believed that SHAS and its leaders were hesitant about this move and that the fear of Rabbi Schach's power was beginning to outweigh the party's newly acquired independence and its desire for the rewards of power.

The decision to name the deputy ministers is tantamount to a final declaration of independence on the part of SHAS: We are in the coalition, with or without the UTJ. The most important role, in addition to that of interior minister, was given to Rabbi Moshe Maya, who will be appointed deputy education minister. Rumor has it that he was the only one in SHAS who would agree to work under Minister Aloni. The reward, however, will be control over the Ultra-Orthodox Education Administration. This control will give SHAS power that could deliver a serious and irreversible blow to the UTJ, which has now lost any possibility of controlling the independent education authority.

Arab MK To Join Public Audit Committee

TA2307075792 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0630 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] For the first time in the Knesset's history, an Arab Knesset member [MK] will participate in the Knesset's Public Audit Committee. The Labor Knesset faction decided to allocate a place on the committee at its expense to the HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] party. The seat is expected to be taken by MK Hashim Mahamid.

MK Hagay Merom, the chairman of the Knesset Steering Committee, told our Knesset affairs correspondent Dov Gilhar that it was agreed with the HADASH faction that whenever the committee discussed a sensitive security issue, MK Hashim Mahamid would not insist on his right to take part in the discussion.

Reportage: Officials Leave for Damascus Talks

'Great Optimism' Expressed

NC2407112792 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0935 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Cairo, 24 Jul (MENA)—Jordanian Information Minister Mahmud al-Sharif has emphasized the importance of today's meeting in Damascus of the foreign ministers of the Arab states concerned with the Middle East peace process. He described the meeting as "a step in the right direction and an encouraging and a promising move for the Arab nation."

In an interview today with Voice of the Arabs Radio, al-Sharif said he hopes that this meeting will lead to coordination among the Arab participants over recent developments in the region as well as the Middle East peace talks. He added: We view this meeting with great optimism and hope it will give Arab rapprochement a chance. We also hope that Arab coordination will last and not be confined to the peace process.

The Jordanian minister described recent developments in the Middle East, including Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's visit to Cairo and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's tour of the region, as "positive." He said he hopes that these developments will give impetus to and accelerate the negotiation process to achieve peace in the region. Al-Sharif added: We always believed that any U.S. activity among the parties concerned with the negotiations could help bring the viewpoints closer and attain the desired ends to the peace process. He added that Baker's tour at this time in particular and the fact that there is a new government in Israel could help accelerate the peace process, bridge the gap in viewpoints, and ease the negotiation process. He noted that so far, the new Israeli Government's political tone differs from that of the previous governments, something that gives rise to hope that it is moving toward peace.

In the radio interview, the Jordanian information minister expressed appreciation for Egypt's efforts to give momentum to the peace process. He said Jordan appreciates the efforts exerted by sisterly Egypt in this regard, noting that they are appreciated by all the Arab states.

Regarding Rabin's proposal to visit a number of Arab capitals and his willingness to invite Arab kings and presidents to visit Israel, the Jordanian minister said: I believe that it is "an extremely premature proposal." He added that these statements are not meant for the Arab world or Arab leaders, but for the U.S. Administration and the U.S. public. Noting that Rabin had previously extended several similar invitations, al-Sharif added: It seems to me that these are theatrical moves that are not really serious, but are acts of "public relations for the benefit of U.S. public opinion." The Jordanian minister added that such calls would be worthy of consideration if they were serious, progress were made in the peace process, legitimate rights were acknowledged, and we had gone a long distance on the road to peace.

Abu-Jabir, Others Depart

JN2307194492 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Excerpts] Foreign Minister Dr. Kamil Abu-Jabir, Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, head of the Jordanian delegation to the Arab-Israeli talks, and Dr. Fayiz al-Tarawinah, member of the Jordanian delegation, left for Damascus this afternoon to attend the coordination meeting of Arab parties participating in the Arab-Israeli negotiations due to be held in Rome. [passage omitted]

Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks, Mr. Faysal al-Husayni, and Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat also left Amman for Damascus to attend the meeting.

Before departing, Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi said:

[Begin recording] ['Abd-al-Shafi] I believe that these talks are almost becoming routine procedure since the start of the peace process. These are meetings aimed at coordinating Arab positions.

Perhaps this meeting has gained more importance in light of Israeli proposals, which the U.S. Government is supporting and the acceptance of which is encouraging.

I view the meeting in Damascus as an important meeting, even though it represents a continuation of previous meetings held for purposes of coordination.

[Unidentified reporter] Within the framework of the Palestinian negotiating strategy, what do the Palestinians have in store for the coming round of talks in Rome, and when do you think this round will be held?

['Abd-al-Shafi] In fact, the next round is supposed to be held in Rome. The U.S. secretary of state has encouraged an immediate start to the newest round.

It is understood that the Italians are not yet prepared for the start of talks in Rome. Hence, the U.S. secretary has proposed holding another round of talks in Washington until Italy can fully prepare itself.

As for our side, we do not object to this. Anyway, we might decide that with our Arab brothers in Damascus. [end recording]

Further on Officials' Statements

JN2307203692 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 1900 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Foreign Minister Kamil Abu-Jabir, head of Jordan's delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, and delegation member Fayiz al-Tarawinah, left for Damascus for an Arab coordination meeting.

The two-day session by Arab parties to the peace negotiations will be held to coordinate strategy before bilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks resume in Rome.

Palestinian negotiators Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, Faysal al-Husayni, and Sa'ib 'Urayqat also left Amman for the Damascus meeting.

[Begin video recording] [Abu-Jabir] Well, there will be several things to be discussed. First of all, the area has witnessed several occurrences and happenings in the past few weeks, not the least of which, of course, is the Israeli elections and the new circumstances that have arisen as a result of that. We will have to evaluate that and also, of course, the visit by Secretary of State Baker and the new ideas that he came up with. So it is, it will be a session to evaluate what has taken place previously and to look into what can, how we can coordinate our activities and our ideas for the future. [sentence as heard] [cut shot]

['Abd-al-Shafi] Well, our main concern is that the Arabic, that there should be a unified Arab stand, I think, in the face of these new tactics of the Israelis, and wanting to deal with issues giving priorities for the Palestinian side and all this.

We should reach an understanding about how we react to the Israeli tactics and keeping in mind the importance of sustaining a unified Arab position.

[Unidentified reporter] Now, it seems that Secretary Baker was extremely optimistic after speaking with the Israeli officials. Did he tell you any specific stand that the Israelis have made, for him to be optimistic?

['Abd-al-Shafi] Well, he indicated mainly the declaration about freezing the contracts for 7,000 units and the fact that they are stopping the subsidies for the families that want to live in the occupied territories. That's mainly is the source of the optimism of Mr. Baker.

[Reporter] And the Palestinian side, do they think that it is a good confidence-building measure from the Israeli Government?

['Abd-al-Shafi] As it is, it is not enough. We cannot accept this and, of course, talking about political and security settlements. Really, this is something that we cannot deal with. We want cessation of settlement process in its entirety, including Jerusalem, which the Israelis leave aside. They don't talk about [that]. They consider Jerusalem to be a separate part. [end recording]

Bin-Shakir Leaves For Turkey on Official Visit

JN2307163592 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Excerpt] Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir left Amman for Turkey at noon today on an official three-day visit in response to an invitation from Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel.

During his visit, his excellency will discuss with a number of Turkish officials development efforts between the two friendly countries and means to reinforce these efforts.

His excellency is accompanied by Engineer Sa'd Hayil al-Surur, minister of public works and housing. [passage omitted]

Bin-Shakir Meets Visiting World Bank Official

JN2307150592 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir received in his office this morning Caio Koch-Weser, World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa. Also attending the meeting were Dhuqan al-Hindawi, deputy prime minister and education minister, and Planning Minister Ziyad Fariz. During the meeting, his excellency the prime minister reviewed the current economic situation, stressing that Jordan's economic policy relies primarily on the private sector to achieve the goals of economic development. He also explained that the export sector enjoys utmost priority among these goals, and that achieving these goals should be in harmony with the requirements of social development and should tackle unemployment and poverty problems. His excellency the prime minister also stressed Jordan's commitment to the peace process, in accordance with the UN resolutions, and the importance of regional cooperation.

For his part, Caio expressed the World Bank's confidence that the Jordanian economy will be able to achieve continued development and that the current achievements indicate a successful application of the reform program, as well as positive growth in the economy. He added that all this constitutes a strong basis for achieving further achievements. He also affirmed that the World Bank is committed to and will continue the process of mobilizing foreign loans to finance Jordan's economic and social efforts.

The meeting was also attended by Safwan al-Batayinah, economic adviser to the prime minister, and the delegation accompanying Caio.

Prince Hasan Meets World Bank Envoy

JN2307163892 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1600 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan received at the Royal Court at noon today the vice president of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa and the accompanying delegation currently visiting Jordan.

His royal highness stressed the importance of focusing attention on the regional perspective of development, considering the viewpoint of the peoples of the region. His highness said that the basis of the issue is the regional political economy rather than the critical economic development programs because the economy, he said, is organically connected with policy and everyday life of the citizens and the community.

The talks also dealt with the need for new forms of dialogue between the peoples and governments of the region, in addition to the need to achieve a wider concept for regional security that covers the social, economic, and political aspects.

King Husayn Receives Envoy, Delegation

JN2307181992 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] At the Royal Hashemite Court today, His Majesty King Husayn received Caio Koch-Weser, vice president of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa, and his accompanying delegation currently visiting Jordan.

Minister of Planning Dr. Ziyad Fariz attended the meeting.

King Congratulates Mubarak on Anniversary

JN2307185992 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Jul 92

["Text" of cable from King Husayn congratulating Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on the 40th anniversary of Egypt's 23 July revolution; date not given]

[Text] Your Excellency brother President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt, may God safeguard him: I take this opportunity of the 40th anniversary of the 23 July revolution to send to your excellency on my behalf, and on behalf of the people and Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, our warmest heartfelt congratulations. I pray to God Almighty that when the same occasion next comes around, your excellency will be enjoying the best of health and the brotherly Egyptian people will be making progress and enjoying prosperity.

[Signed] Your brother Husayn

Deputies Warn Against Appeasing 'U.S. Enemy'

JN2407101892 Amman AL-UFUQ in Arabic 22 Jul 92 p 10

[Text] Deputies Layth Shubaylat, Mansur Murad, and Ya'qub Qirrish, issued a statement last Sunday, 19 July, in which they denounced the Jordanian Government's policy of trying to appease Washington by agreeing to an official boycott of Iraq and gradually toughening the implementation of this boycott.

The statement added: "Jordan, which has stood with Iraq out of an inborn gallantry, is asked, proceeding from the requirements of living before the requirements of honor, to maintain its stance, renounce submissiveness, and embrace hunger and death so as to gain life and satisfaction.

"Even if Jordanians chose to secure satisfaction for themselves, their dignity would not allow them to have satisfaction alone and not share it with their brother Iraqis and the sons of the glorious intifadah, let alone the fact that the hunger they are escaping will inevitably pursue them at the hands of the world usurer."

The statement went on to say: "We have seen how the government's courteous overtures toward the United States have not stopped, and will not stop, U.S. insolence, which is going too far in humiliating its 'friends.' This is because the United States has no friends, even among its allies, and practices terrorism and oppression only toward others. We wonder how Islamic, national, and pan-Arab parties and organizations can deal with the boycott of Iraq timidly, without exercising real and serious pressure on the government to lift the blockade publicly and officially."

The three deputies added: "Our free people will never accept the concessions offered by the government at times and denied at other times. Our people would be amazed to know that the Americans are threatening to call off the periodic joint military maneuvers between Jordan and the United States. What kind of regular maneuvers are these, given that the people know nothing about them? How can we conduct maneuvers with people who have slaughtered, and are still slaughtering, the Iraqis? How can we conduct maneuvers with people who are burning Iraqi crops with an inconceivable hatred?"

The deputies concluded their statement: "We warn ourselves, the government, and the organizations that claim to be political and are being established at this hour of humiliation, that the masses will rise and crush us all if we do not preserve a minimum level of dignity. This people, for whose food we claim concern, and who are getting poorer and are being crushed at a time when its 'saviors' are enjoying fantastic wealth, will act one day if we do not respect its will. So let us fear the anger of the patient people, and let sincere forces call for their nation's right to draft a law banning blockade and boycott on any Arab state. Let these forces raise their voices, denounce any joint maneuvers with the U.S. enemy and any relations at the expense of our brothers, dignity, and nation."

Upper House Approves Draft Law on Parties

JN2307144692 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1100 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The Upper House of Parliament today approved the draft law on political parties for the year 1991 during a session chaired by Mr. Ahmad al-Lawzi, the speaker of the House, in the presence of Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and a number of cabinet ministers.

Further on Baker Talks in Zahlah 23 Jul

Al-Hirawi Welcomes Secretary Baker

NC2307173792 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1605 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Statement by President Ilyas al-Hirawi during a welcoming ceremony for U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Zahlah on 23 July—recorded]

[Text] Mr. Secretary, I heartily welcome you in my home and in my homeland, Lebanon. Your presence here today with your distinguished delegation clearly indicates the depth of the relationship between our two countries. We have established this relationship with you based on our commitment to the principles of peace and democracy and respect for human rights. Your presence here personally in Lebanon is a new and clear affirmation of your support for Lebanon's independence and sovereignty on all its territory within its internationally recognized borders.

Lebanon has lived in painful agony for 16 years. Your presence among us today testifies to Lebanon's exit from the tragedies of war, thanks to the agreement of all Lebanese on the national accord document, which I swore constitutionally to implement in letter and spirit. There is no doubt, however, that Lebanon will not accomplish final peace before the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 425. Mr. Secretary, your country has committed itself to the success of the international peace conference and to the resolution of the Middle East crisis in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

Lebanon, which is in solidarity with its Arab brothers in their efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace, is eager to end a human tragedy which has long existed in the region. We are hopeful that your current tour will be fruitful in that it will push the peace process forward and achieve its noble objective.

I welcome you once again. I hope you will convey to President George Bush our best wishes. We stress to him and to you, our friend, our determination to make concise decisions which will restore Lebanon to its previous era, in which prosperity and security prevailed.

I welcome you again. I hope I will meet with you shortly in our capital, Beirut.

Officials Give News Conference

NC2307180292 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1611 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Joint news conference by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, preceded by an exchange of remarks between Baker and Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi, in Zahlah on 23 July—recorded; Baker speaks in English followed by Arabic translation; Buwayz speaks in Arabic; all questions are in English]

[Baker] Mr. President, thank you for welcoming my colleagues and myself here in your home. Thank you for welcoming us to Lebanon, and thank you for welcoming us to your home village.

[Al-Hirawi] Thank you, Mr. Secretary General [as heard]. Welcome to Zahlah, my home, and to Lebanon. And I give my place to the minister of foreign affairs.

[Baker] Let me make one or two other comments, ladies and gentlemen, and I would be glad to respond to questions and I am sure my colleague would as well. I think this is an important time for this region. I think it is an important time for the peace process, to which Lebanon has committed itself. I believe that there are new possibilities for progress toward peace in the aftermath of the accession of a new government in Israel. We have discussed that with the president, the prime minister, the foreign minister, and their colleagues. We have also discussed the desire of the United States to see what has been a tragedy here in Lebanon come to an end. We are pleased to be able to have this meeting in Lebanon, and we strongly support the political independence, the sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of Lebanon. We hope that our presence here makes a statement in support of that independence and that sovereignty. But we say finally that we support strongly both the letter and the spirit of the al-Ta'if Agreement. We would like to see the implementation of that agreement and support that strongly.

With respect to the question of elections, it is the position of the United States that this is a decision for the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Government alone to make. Of course, it is critical that any elections that are held be free and fair elections in keeping with the true tenets of democracy. It is vital that any elections be free of intimidation—any, any hint of intimidation or coercion. I want to thank the government for welcoming us here, and I compliment them on their struggle to reverse what has been a tragedy here; on their efforts to bring political stability and economic stability and reform to Lebanon—goals that the United States supports.

[Unidentified correspondent] You have met with President al-Asad. Did you feel after that meeting that he is committed to redeployment in the al-Biqa' Valley by the September deadline?

[Baker] I think that the Government of Syria wants to redeploy its forces—to use their terms—as soon as possible. I think that there is perhaps a difference of interpretation of the al-Ta'if Agreement between the interpretation that we would put on it and an interpretation that they might put on it. Let me say one more time that it is a firm position of the United States that the al-Ta'if Agreement should be implemented in both its letter and its spirit. Let me say one final thing in partial response to that question. In our interpretation of the agreement, the Governments of Syria and Lebanon should get together in December to begin, to decide how to begin the redeployment.

[Correspondent, correcting Baker] September.

[Baker] September, did I say... Yes, September.

[Correspondent] Secretary Baker. What was your impression when you arrived in al-Biqa' Valley?

[Baker] Well, I have to tell you that I never felt that I would be coming to the al-Biqa' Valley, having been in the United States Government in one form or another for the past 12 years. I do believe that it is an indication of the extent to which the United States supports the political independence and sovereignty of Lebanon. There are many Americans of Lebanese descent who have been saddened through the years by the tragedy that is taking place in this country. We would like to see the country rebuilt. We would like to see political and economic stability return to Lebanon. And we strongly support the efforts of this government to exercise and maintain its independence and sovereignty. You want this translated into Arabic? It is OK.

[Correspondent] Sir, what do you think the [words indistinct] the foreign hostages?

[Baker] I can't answer that question for you today. I don't have an answer for the [word indistinct].

[Correspondent] Mr. Secretary, how do you assess your meeting with the president?

[Baker] I think we had a very good meeting. We covered a wide range of subjects, as I have indicated to you. I think that Lebanon remains firmly committed to the process of peace which we have established. I hope that the minister shares our view that there may now be new opportunities for progress in the light of the new government in Israel. And let me say that I am glad to be able to come to Lebanon to meet with this government that is making courageous efforts to reverse the situation and to bring political and economic stability as well as independence and sovereignty to this country.

[Correspondent] Secretary Baker, did you clarify your point on [word indistinct] of al-Ta'if [words indistinct] the Lebanese interpretation that after two years Syrian redeployment from [word indistinct] highway to the al-Biqa' to take place should take place as [words indistinct]?

[Baker] Well, you say that is the Lebanese view. I am not going to presume to give you the Lebanese view when you have the foreign minister of Lebanon.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] or a middle ground between their view and the Syrian view that [words indistinct]?

[Baker] Well, we think no, it really isn't. It is our interpretation of what the agreement calls for. We think it calls for Syria and Lebanon to decide on redeployment of Syrian troops to the al-Biqa' this September. We think that's the language of the agreement. After that, there would in fact be redeployment. OK?

[Correspondent] [Word indistinct] they decide?

[Baker] They are to decide on redeployment of Syrian troops to the al-Biqa' this September, after which there would be the redeployment of Syrian troops in accordance with al-Ta'if. That is our position.

[Correspondent] Mr. Buwayz, what is the Lebanese interpretation?

[Buwayz] The Lebanese Government is determined to impose its authority over all Lebanese soil. Understanding will be reached with the Syrian authorities on the appropriate timing that takes into consideration the Lebanese state's ability to assume all its responsibilities in the area where the redeployment will take place. We hope that these proposals will be implemented as soon as possible, by the end of this summer.

[Correspondent] Sir, you are insisting that [words indistinct] redeployment action will take place by September [words indistinct]?

[Buwayz] The redeployment is linked to security requirements. The Lebanese state will seek to ensure that its Armed Forces will be completely ready to implement this plan by the end of this summer.

[Correspondent] Secretary Baker, do you [words indistinct] implement Resolution 425 before the end of the bilateral negotiations?

[Baker] Yes. The United States supports 425.

Baker, Delegation Depart

NC2307153792 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1445 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The Lebanese-U.S. talks held at President Ilyas al-Hirawi's residence in Zahlah have ended. President al-Hirawi, Prime Minister Rashid al-Sulh, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, and Foreign Ministry Secretary General Ambassador Suhayl Shammas represented Lebanon at the talks. Attending on the U.S. side were Secretary of State James Baker, his assistant Edward Djerejian, U.S. State Department Spokesperson Margaret Tutwiler, and U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Ryan Crocker.

Baker left for Damascus at 1600 today. From there he will leave for Riyadh, the last stage of his regional tour. Baker announced that Washington supports Lebanon's independence and sovereignty over all of its territories, adding: Our presence here is proof of that. The United States strongly supports implementing the al-Ta'if accord in letter and spirit.

The U.S. secretary of state stressed the importance of holding free and honest elections in Lebanon, free from disruption and coercion. He said he believes that the Syrian Government will withdraw its forces as soon as possible. He continued: I believe that there is perhaps a difference between our interpretation of the al-Ta'if

accord and the Syrian interpretation. According to our interpretation, the accord must be implemented in letter and spirit.

Baker added: As we see it, the al-Ta'if accord requires the Lebanese and Syrian Governments to meet in September to decide how the (?redeployment) will begin.

Foreign Minister Buwayz asserted that the Lebanese Government is determined to establish its authority over all Lebanese territories, explaining that an understanding will be reached with the Syrian authorities on the appropriate time to do this. He said that this timing must take into account the Lebanese state's ability to establish its authority in the area where the redeployment will take place.

Baker's Tour Said Aimed at Assisting Bush in Elections

NC2807143192 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0550 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Political commentary: "Baker Is Campaigning for Bush"]

[Excerpts] According to U.S. oil experts, the United States will continue to depend on the Middle East as its main oil supplier for a long time. These experts note that America needs imported oil and that half of its imports come from the Middle East. The Middle East is a tinderbox that is always set to go up in flames, because it is a likely place for the outbreak of wars, an arena for intervention, and a fertile ground for revolutions, as the experts say. We view U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's tour of the region as one such intervention. This time the tour is aimed not only at securing the flow of oil and wealth but also at the U.S. election and the personal ambitions of President Bush.

While the stated goal of Baker's visit is to give impetus to the settlement process, the real goal is an election campaign that will begin with winning over the American Jews and persuading them to vote for President Bush and the Republicans. It will probably end with the application of great pressure on the Arab governments aimed at forcing them to make concessions to the Zionist enemy.

U.S. sources admitted that Baker is embarking on his new Middle East tour with one eye on Bush's election campaign. These sources add that the entire situation in the region, as concerns the settlement process, the situation in Iraq, security in the Gulf, and the stability of oil prices, will have direct and obvious effects over the next few months on the U.S. presidential and congressional elections. Since the Middle East region has so much influence on the situation in the United States, the region's leaders are required to help President Bush win a second term in the White House. The degree of importance that the region enjoys suggests that Baker is carrying with him more demands and concessions to ease Bush's election task. Since opinion polls repeatedly indicate that Democratic Party candidate Clinton will win the election, the noose is getting tighter around the neck of Bush, who sent his secretary of state to the region in an attempt to loosen the noose and give the President some breathing room.

The Democratic Party's announcement that united Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Zionist entity could be part of an attempt to tighten the noose and win over American Jewish votes for Clinton. If the Arabs expect positive results from the settlement talks, the U.S. election could surprise them by bringing in a pro-Zionist and extremist—in the Arabs' official jargon—president, after the Zionist extremist had been removed from the enemy government and replaced by doves, according to this jargon.

As we have mentioned, U.S. sources are talking about the entire situation in the region. This means that the leaders of the Arab countries concerned with the settlement will be pressured by Baker to sign a blank check; taken back to the United States and viewed on the campaign scoreboard, this could give more votes to President Bush. As for Iraq, the head of the U.S. Administration will not hesitate to finish off what is left of Iraq's military and economic capabilities under the guise of removing Saddam, whose presence will keep the Gulf region's security unstable. As for stability in oil prices, this is more or less guaranteed by the presence of large numbers of U.S. troops in Hejaz and Kuwait and the ban on Iraq's oil experts, something that will delight the hearts of the U.S. oil experts and influence the voters. As for the Libyan issue, it could be rekindled once again if Bush's election campaign lacks momentum. But is all this enough to keep Bush in the White House?

Before answering this question, we note that President Bush could try to put psychological pressure on the Arabs by playing up fears that he might lose on 3 November; some Arabs might be fooled by this trick. They, in turn, will put pressure on those who refuse to give up their rights and lands to the Zionists on the premise that the Democratic Party, which has recognized Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel, would not give the Arabs as much as the Republicans do. In other words, they say that Bill Clinton will take from the Arabs and give to the usurpers much more than Bush would take. The fact is that many Arabs, particularly the kings and autocrats, have linked their fate to that of Bush and Yitzhaq Rabin. [passage omitted]

Despite all this, we assert that what has happened and is happening is not enough to keep George Bush in power. Baker may be determined to bring back to his master in the White House a specific victory that could ease the President's anxieties and concerns caused by reports of Clinton's superior standing in the polls, but such tranquilizers will not end Bush's insomnia. The antidote coming out of the Middle East may not provide relief for Bush, particularly since the U.S. Congress' and media's concerns over Bush's foreign policy are growing. Nothing is guaranteed, no matter how great Baker's victory is and regardless of the high price the Arabs might pay. Since

the whole world is witnessing great changes, these winds must also reach the White House to have an effect.

Cabinet Sets Dates for Parliamentary Elections

NC2407123392 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Statement by Information Minister Michel Samahah after cabinet meeting chaired by President Ilyas al-Hirawi in Beirut on 24 July—recorded]

[Text] The cabinet thanked the president, the prime minister, and the foreign minister for their contacts that led to the meeting with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Zahlah yesterday. It commended their stand during these talks, which led to the narrowing of views with the United States on the topics under discussion.

The cabinet then reviewed the Interior Ministry preparations to implement the new election law and the decrees that must be issued to hold parliamentary elections. The cabinet issued decree No. 2540 calling on the electoral constituencies to hold the elections as follows: Electoral constituencies in the governorates of north Lebanon and al-Biqa' on 23 August 1992. Electoral constituencies in the governorates of Beirut and Mount Lebanon on 30 August 1992. Electoral constituencies in the governorates of the south and al-Nabatiyah on 6 September 1992. The cabinet asked the internal security forces and the Lebanese Army to maintain security and secure the full freedom of the voters.

Cabinet Deliberations 22 Jul

NC2307202392 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1900 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] The cabinet session ended at approximately 2020 today. Afterward, Information Minister Michel Samahah said: The cabinet met tonight under the chairmanship of his excellency the president. The cabinet took action on most of the items on its agenda. The cabinet instructed the defense minister to take appropriate measures to ensure the restoration of all the property of the Lebanese state being held by others, wherever this property may be.

The interior minister submitted to the cabinet the resignation of [former Foreign Ministry Secretary General] Faruq Abu-al-Lam' from public office. The cabinet accepted the resignation.

His excellency the president told the cabinet that this morning he signed the bill amending the elections law. The cabinet discussed the procedures for implementing the elections law, forming the election committees, and calling the elections. The cabinet decided to hold an emergency session on Friday morning to issue a decree concerning these procedures.

Strike in Christian Areas Ends Peacefully

NC2307161692 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The eastern [Christian] areas today staged a strike called by opponents of the parliamentary elections. The strike was peaceful thanks to the vigilance of the Army and the internal security forces. No security incidents have been reported. The Lebanese Army and the internal security forces deployed patrols to maintain peace.

The strike covered the areas of Kasrawan, Jubayl, al-Ashrafiyah, al-Matn, and Bshirri.

FRC Accuses Mosad, 'Arafat of Khalid Murder

NC2307165892 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] A statement issued by the Fatah Revolutionary Council [FRC], led by Abu-Nidal [Sabri al-Banna], accused Israel's Mosad and Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat of assassinating FRC spokesman Walid Khalid at the entrance to the Mar Ilyas camp in Beirut.

The statement said that the assassination targeted all the Palestinian and Islamic groups and pledged to punish the perpetrators.

Hizballah Statements on Air Raid, Assassination

NC2407080292 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] The Israeli aggression against southern Lebanon, manifested yesterday in brutal attacks on Iqlim al-Tuffah on the one hand and the assassination of the official spokesman for the Fatah Movement—the Revolutionary Council [FRC], Walid Khalid, on the other, coincided with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visit to Zahlah where he met with Lebanese officials in an attempt to impose the U.S. settlement on Lebanon in a way that fits in with the Zionist enemy's desires. The objective of this settlement is to force Lebanon to make further concessions to the Zionist designs.

On this subject, a responsible Hizballah source made the following statement:

The increasing crimes of the Zionist entity against our people and defenseless villages are in line with the U.S. stand, especially since they are occurring during U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's tour of the region. He claims that this tour is an attempt to bolster the opportunities for pushing the peace process forward.

The responsible source said the aggression is also in line with the hopes of those betting on the new Zionist age under Yitzhaq Rabin, where false hopes were revived among some, especially the Egyptian regime, regarding possibilities of progress in the course of negotiations. This course is now equal or parallel to the course of conspiracy against our people and nation, for Husni Mubarak received Yitzhaq Rabin, the butcher whose

hands are drenched in the blood of the Lebanese and Palestinian people. Mubarak is eager to assume the role entrusted to him by the U.S. Administration—a role in which the Egyptian regime is expected to be a godfather and promoter of U.S. policy and the vital pressure factor on the rest of the Arab parties to urge and force them to accept further concessions to the Zionist designs.

The responsible Hizballah source concluded: We place these crimes in the hands of the international community and our nation so that everyone will realize that increasing talk about peace is no more than a pretext, the intention of which is to set up a thick screen that obscures the scheme of killing, expulsion, destruction, settlement, and devouring the resources in our region by the Zionist enemy with U.S. help. The loan guarantees soon to be given to Israel to bolster its economic situation and enable it to continue settling Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world are one form of this help.

With regard to the assassination of FRC official spokesman Walid Khalid, Hizballah has issued the following statement:

With great regret and sadness, we received the news of the assassination of struggler FRC Central Committee member Walid Khalid. While we express our condemnation of this ugly crime of assassinating one of the symbols of struggle in the Palestinian arena, we stress our solidarity and alliance with the brothers in the FRC as well as all the other struggling factions adopting the course of confrontation with the Zionist enemy. We affirm our loyalty toward our responsibilities and commitments to our brothers, the sons of the Palestinian people, and their just cause, the cause of all Muslims and honorable people in the world.

Two UNIFIL Soldiers Injured in Explosion

NC2407104692 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Our correspondent in the south has reported that at around 1130 today Israeli fighter planes raided Hizballah positions in Iqlim al-Tuffah. Four fighter planes fired two volleys of missiles on the villages of Mlita, al-Luwayzah, and 'Ayn Bu Siwar.

Sources in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] told Voice of Lebanon that at 0300 today an explosive device targeted a patrol of the Fijian forces operating within the framework of the international forces while it was driving along the road between al- Qulaylah and al-Mansuri in the south.

The explosion injured two of the five Fijian soldiers on patrol. They were taken to the UNIFIL field hospital at al Naqurah. Their condition has been described as satisfactory.

Further on Secretary Baker's 23 Jul Visit

Holds News Conference With al-Shar'

JN2307123092 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker stated that his talks with President Hafiz al-Asad were good. This came at a joint news conference Faruq al-Shar' and Mr. Baker held this morning at the conclusion of the secretary's talks with the Syrian officials. The media delegation accompanying Baker and correspondents of the Arab and foreign news agencies and television networks attended the news conference.

Baker began by saying: We concluded our talks with President Hafiz al-Asad and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' last night. The talks, which lasted four and a half hours, were good. I shall leave it for Mr. al-Shar' to speak in detail about Syria's position. I believe there is a general feeling of the existence of new real and fruitful opportunities that should be explored as soon as possible. He said: We spoke about the peace process in the light of the change of the Israeli Government and about the situation in Lebanon and bilateral relations. He added: I would like to seize this opportunity to again thank President Hafiz al-Asad for receiving us despite the circumstances resulting from his mother's death.

Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' then spoke. He thanked Mr. Baker for his continuous efforts for the sake of the peace process. He stated: President George Bush and Mr. Baker made intensive efforts to render the peace process possible in the region. He added: We began the peace talks in Madrid and continued them in Washington and then stopped for some time. We hope the new developments, especially in the presence of a new government in Israel, will help all parties concerned with the peace process to resume bilateral talks as soon as possible. Al-Shar' said: President Hafiz al-Asad's talks with Mr. Baker last night were positive. We hope they will bear fruit and serve the peace process in the region.

Asked about the new changes in Israel and the statements made on settlements and the corresponding confidence-building measures by Syria and the Arabs, al-Shar' said: Don't forget that the Arabs did their best to make the peace process possible. Without the flexibility demonstrated by the Arabs, especially when we in Syria accepted President Bush's proposals, there would have been no peace conference in Madrid. Al-Shar' added: The obstacles to the peace process during the past 10 months were created by the fact that the Shamir government did not want peace; therefore, the Arabs should not alone be asked to display more flexibility. He stated that it is now the new Israeli Government's turn to undertake new and radical changes in the Israeli position in conformity with the Arab position.

Baker commented: During my meeting with the new Israeli Government, the Palestinian representatives, and the Arab officials in the Arab capitals I visited, I sensed that the overall signs are positive, as Mr. al-Shar' indicated at the outset of his remarks. Baker expressed the conviction that there will be some new opportunities. It can be said, he added, that during our talks last night, it was agreed in general to resume the peace process as soon as possible. Mr. Baker said: As I said in Egypt yesterday, I am optimistic, and the parties should resume negotiations in the presence of change and in the light of positive signs.

Asked about the new Israeli Government's position on settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan, al-Shar' said: Any settlements—security or political—are illegal. They are a basic obstacle to peace in the region now and in the future, which is the unwavering position of both Syria and the Arabs. Al-Shar' added: The statements we read about the position of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin do not at all help, because any acceptance of any type of settlements in the occupied Arab territories will mean recognizing occupation; therefore, we appreciate the American position as expressed by Mr. Baker during his tour. Al-Shar' added: If we have to be optimistic over the new change in Israel, this will be due to the fact that we have a positive evaluation from Mr. Baker. He added: I want to be extremely realistic. Let us test the new Israeli Government's policy when the concerned parties resume the peace talks at the earliest time possible. Al-Shar' said: We are serious about the peace process and have expressed this frequently during the era of the former Israeli Government. We will continue to do so. We want to see substantial results and a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

Asked about the change he perceived in the new Israeli Government's position about the principle of land for peace and withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories following his meeting with Rabin, Secretary Baker said: I will let the new Israeli Government express its position by itself at the negotiating table.

Asked if he sensed a change in the present Israeli Government's policy, compared with the former one, Secretary Baker said: Yes, I felt a desire for change and a reorganization of priorities. I believe we will see an important, major reduction in settlement activity. I said this in Egypt yesterday, and I have a strong conviction in this regard.

Asked about the U.S. position, he stated: The U.S. position will not change. We are talking about a comprehensive settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338, which I have stated on several occasions and indicated that the concerned parties have their own interpretations of these two resolutions. We understand that Resolution 242 means land for peace.

Responding to a question about whether there are any positive developments regarding the situation in Lebanon, Mr. Baker said: I believe the situation is better now than it was before. If we say that recent developments are positive, I believe that other steps should still be taken regarding Lebanon. In this respect, Baker hoped

that the Lebanese and Israeli negotiating teams will return to the negotiating table soon to make progress on the proposed issues of discussion.

Asked about loan guarantees in exchange for curtailing settlement activity, al-Shar' said: The word curtailment is misleading, because we are talking about a complete halt and freeze to settlement-building. Therefore, when we say curtailment, that means the process of building settlements is continuing, and we are totally opposed to constructing any settlements.

Al-Shar' added: Syria's position on the issue of U.S. loan guarantees to Israel is linked to conditions being set for granting these guarantees; therefore, we cannot prejudge things, and Mr. Baker already discussed this point in detail yesterday with President Hafiz al-Asad. I have the feeling and impression that the issue of settlements, and the conditions linked to them, are like logarithms that are hard to understand; therefore, they should be judged in the light of the decision that will be made in their regard.

Asked why the United States does not use the same language with Israel as it uses toward others when implementing UN resolutions, Baker said: I believe the United States is doing its best to use its influence and power to implement Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, in the same way as it is using its power and influence to implement other Security Council resolutions. Baker added: Remember that UN Resolutions 242 and 338 call for negotiations, and one of the things we did during the past months, and during our present tour, was to give a push to the negotiating process. We sought to implement Resolutions 242 and 338, and now we have indications that this subject can be resolved if the parties are willing to do so. He noted that he spoke about a new opportunity in this regard.

Asked if all parties will participate in the negotiations, al-Shar' said: We understood from Mr. Baker that the new Israeli Government wishes to resume talks with all concerned Arab parties as soon as possible. There is no indication that any party will be excluded. Al-Shar' added: We are talking about a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and we in Syria believe that if there is no comprehensive and just peace there will be no peace, the proof of which is clear.

Asked about resuming peace talks in the region, Secretary Baker said: During my talks in the region, I have not found any objection to resuming these talks, nor did I find disagreement in viewpoints about their resumption. Secretary Baker expressed the hope that bilateral talks will resume as soon as possible so that the parties can benefit from this opportunity.

Al-Shar' said: I confirm what Mr. Baker said and reiterate our well-known position; that is, we in Syria and the Arabs are always willing to resume peace talks as soon as possible.

Concludes Visit

JN2307161192 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker left Damascus at 1730 today after a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. He was seen off at Damascus international airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar', senior Foreign Ministry officials, and the U.S. ambassador and embassy staff in Damascus.

U.S. Urged To Verify Israeli Position

JN2307073592 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 23 Jul 92

[From the press review]

[Text] AL-THAWRAH writes about the declared American position on the issue of settlements, noting James Baker's assertion that settlements, under all names, constitute an obstacle to peace. This shows that Washington deems settlements as illegitimate and a threat to the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH writes: Mr. Baker announced that he is not ready to recommend to President Bush to agree on the loan guarantees until after the Israeli plans are explored. This shows that Washington has not witnessed any positive development in the Israeli position that calls for reconsidering its position on the loan guarantees. However, the leaked reports about an imminent American-Israeli agreement on the guarantees leave many questions unanswered.

AL-THAWRAH asks Washington to deal earnestly with this serious matter and to verify Israel's commitment to complete cessation of settlement building before taking any step that would harm its reputation and undermine its credibility as a neutral broker in the peace process. Yitzhaq Rabin's insistence on continuing the so-called security settlements in the Golan, Jerusalem, and the Jordan Valley reflects Israel's rejection of the principle of withdrawal. This, therefore, deprives the peace process of one of its most important pillars.

Commentary Views Rabin's 'Real Test' for Peace

JN2307172792 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has concluded his tour of the countries directly concerned with the Arab-Israeli conflict after holding talks with President Hafiz al- Asad. These talks were described as good and positive. They dealt with the future of the peace process. Secretary Baker did his best to spread a new atmosphere in the region that would push the peace process forward by focusing on the developments in Israel as a result of Shamir's fall and the advent of Rabin. But the real commitment to UN

Security Council resolutions and the essence of the U.S. initiative, including exchanging land for peace and withdrawal from the occupied territories, remains the real test for the new Israeli Government. Secretary Baker announced that the United States adheres to the essence of its intitiative, that peace is, first and foremost, based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338; that there is no alternative to a comprehensive solution and the halt of settlement building; that he finds no difference between political and security settlements; and that the entire settlement process is an obstacle to peace.

The fact is that the Arabs who responded to the U.S. initiative are not asking for more than Israel's wholehearted response to this intitiative and for its becoming involved in a comprehensive settlement leading to a withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and an end to all settlement activities. Secretary Baker yesterday surely heard what President Hafiz al-Asad told him before regarding Syria's unshakable faith in just peace as a way to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Just peace is based on the resolutions and principles of international legitimacy. There are many resolutions that condemn Israel's illegitimate practices and its attacks on the sovereignty of Arab territories. There are also many resolutions that call on Israel to fully and comprehensively withdraw from these territories, stop all settlement activity, and cancel all measures of expansion and Judaization which the United Nations views as null and void and as a serious violation of international law and the Geneva Conventions.

It is clear that the ball is in the Israeli court. The Arab stand, in general, is the same as the international stand. We do not think that the international community can allow anyone to violate its principles and laws. The Golan is Syrian land, despite Israel's security excuses, and there is no alternative to the Golan's return to Syria. Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza are Palestinian territories and there is no alternative to their return to the Palestinians and to enabling them to exercise their right of self-determination. Southern Lebanon is Lebanese territory and should be returned to Lebanon. All the security justifications put forward by Israel are void.

Peace is the road to security and stability. A just peace is the only thing that will eradicate the roots of war and tension. Israel has given many signs which give the impression that there is something different when compared to the stands of Shamir's government. These signs, however, are definitely not enough and do not meet the minimum requirements of the peace process. The freezing of settlements, which Rabin termed as political settlements, is a limited step that does not mean much. Indeed, it allows for maneuvering due to the continuation of the other more important and more serious type of settlements, which Rabin termed security settlements. President Bush has said that settlements contradict peace. Settlements were also described by Baker as an obstacle to peace. Hence, there is no alternative for the new Israeli rulers but to remove all the obstacles and recognize the Arabs' right to regain their occupied territories and the Palestinians' right to self- determination in their homeland that has no traces of occupation.

Peace sought by the world and the region's countries requires Israel's respect for the resolutions of international legitimacy and its commitment toward implementing them. Occupation and settlements clearly violate the resolutions of international legitimacy. It is impossible to achieve real peace without removing them. Hence, we say that the ball is in the Israeli court and that the United States, and the entire international community, can assist Israel in taking the only road to peace by emphasizing their commitment to UN resolutions and rejecting any bargaining over them.

Peace should either be just, comprehensive, and deeply-rooted, or should not exist at all.

Daily Sees Hope in 'Radical' U.S. Policy Change

JN2407070592 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 24 Jul 92

[From the Press Review]

[Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH comments editorially on U.S. Secretary Baker's tour of the region. It affirms that the Middle East issue is a major political and international concern, not because it is the oldest issue on the annual agenda of the United Nations, but because the region currently represents either a safety valve of safety or a detonator.

AL-BA'TH writes that when the U.S. secretary declares his adherence to UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, he gives rise to the hope for a radical change in the U.S. position that has often angered the Arabs, making them view the United States negatively and distrusting its successive administrations.

The paper adds: In this proud Arab country, we share the U.S. view that the current peace opportunity is important. But our current concern is to see international credibility developed enough to usher in a new historical era in this region based on the principles of a just peace in accordance with what has been approved by the United Nations and its various agencies.

Concluding its editorial, the paper writes: Irrespective of promises and verbal pledges, the Arabs reject double standards and urge the international community not to fall victim to Zionist claims. They also urge the United States and the West to adhere to international legitimacy as the path to peace in a region that directly affects the entire world.

Afghanistan

Leadership Council Agrees on Party Representation

LD2307161792 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The Leadership Council of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA] was chaired this afternoon by esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, chairman of the council and president of the ISA. Esteemed Ayatollah Shaykh Mohammad 'Asef Mohseni, secretary and spokesman of the ISA leadership, told a BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY correspondent that the following matters were approved unanimously in today's meeting of the leadership:

1. A commission was appointed today to draft the charter of a [word indistinct] council and to present it to the Leadership Council as soon as possible.

2. Each party should put forward six to nine people to the cabinet of the Islamic government of Afghanistan. These members are to be proposed to the Leadership Council after consultation with the head of state and the prime minister.

3. If a member from the Jehad Council is appointed as a minister, that member will lose his membership at the Jehad Council and his party should introduce another person to the Jehad Council.

Hekmatyar, Premier View Kabul Security Situation

LD2307164492 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0830 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Brother mojahed [Golboddin] Hekmatyar, the amir of the Islamic Party [Hezb-e Eslami] of Afghanistan, yesterday met at his residence with ['Abdol Sabur Farid] the prime minister of the interim government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

A spokesman of the Prime Minister's office told the correspondent of Radio Message of Freedom in this connection that during the meeting, the security situation in Kabul city and the recent events, which caused heart-breaking incidents, were discussed.

Esteemed Hekmatyar told brother Ostad Farid to show complete cooperation in maintaining all-around peace and security, and he will not spare any efforts in this regard.

Bangladesh

Aid to Voluntary Return of Rohingyas Discussed

BK2407081292 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0130 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Bangladesh and Myanmar [Burma] have agreed to create congenial atmosphere for voluntary return of the Rohingyas to their homes. The agreement came at the seventh official-level meeting between the two countries held at Maungdaw, Arakan, yesterday. The 12-member Bangladesh delegation at the meeting was led by Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Omar Farooq and the 10-member Myanmar team by Director General of Immigration Maung Aung. The two sides agreed to continue meetings and discuss different aspects of the repatriation issue. These included security of the Rohingyas, return of their property, guaranteee for all civil rights including their right to practice religion, (?accept) service in government organizations, own properties, and receive education.

The Myanmar side also agreed to return houses of the Rohingyas they had left behind. They also informed that there is no fresh movement of troops along the border and that some immigration department officials are moving in their border areas.

The Bangladesh team handed over to the Myanmar team a fresh list of Rohingyas.

Parliament Briefed on Foreign Loan, Remittance

BK2207162392 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] During the question hour, Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman informed the house that the country's accumulated foreign loan up to the 30th of April this year amounted to over 28,243 crore taka. Of this, about 3,772 crore taka was received during the last fiscal year. The finance minister further informed the house that annual remittance by Bangladeshis abroad in the recent years amounts to $833 million, including $56 million from UK. Mr. Saifur Rahman told the house that according to available figures, the size of overdue loans is over 8,153 crore taka. He further said that 342 crore taka out of 1,476 crore taka house building finance loan is overdue. The finance minister informed the house that 1,033 kgs of smuggled gold worth about 51 crore taka was seized during the last 10 years.

Post and Telecommunications Minister M. Keramat Ali informed the house that the plan to set up digital exchanges in all areas of Dhaka city and each district headquarters in the country will be implemented as soon as possible.

India

Uttar Pradesh To Obey Court Order on Ayodhya

BK2307133292 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The Uttar Pradesh [UP] government has told the Supreme Court that it will unconditionally obey the orders passed by the Apex Court and the Allahabad High Court. The undertaking was given by the counsel of the state government in an affidavit filed today before the division bench comprising Mr. Justice M.M. Venkatachelliah and Mr. Justice G.N. Ray. They are hearing the contempt petitions filed against the UP government and

others for the violation of court orders in regard to the construction activity going on in Ayodhya. The state government counsel also stated that for fully implementing the orders of the Supreme Court and the high court, the compliance of these orders by the leaders of different religious groups congregating in Ayodhya is essential. The affidavit said that these leaders would be meeting to arrive at a consensus on Friday after their meeting with the prime minister today. The state government counsel said that the decision of these leaders will be known latest by Sunday. He sought the adjournment of the hearing till Monday.

Granting the adjournment, the judges said it is being done in the larger interests of exploring a solution to the problem. Upholding the apprehensions of the counsel for the petitioners, the judges observed that so far as the inhibition or restraint for continuing with the construction work in Ayodhya is concerned orders have already been passed by the Supreme Court and the Allahabad High Court.

Parliament 'Abruptly' Adjourned

BK2407093892 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Both the houses of parliament were abruptly adjourned again today following uproarious scenes over the Ayodhya developments. In the Lok Sabha, National Front, Left, and the Muslim League members trooped into the well of the house demanding immediate discussion on the continuing construction activities at Ayodhya. When the speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil's repeated pleas to pacify the agitated members went unheeded, he adjourned the house for the day. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] members were also on their feet waving copies of a newspaper and demanded an explanation from the government. Nothing was heard in the din.

In the Rajya Sabha also the non-BJP opposition demanded that the prime minister should take the house into confidence about the talks he had with the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad—World Hindu Council] leaders, saints, and sadhus [mendicants] on finding a way out of the Ayodhya problem. They alleged that the construction activities and the kar seva [voluntary work to build the temple] are going on even after the prime minister spoke to the sadhus. They demanded that the prime minister should come to the house immediately and make a statement on these developments. The deputy chairperson, Dr. Najma Heptullah, assured the members that she will find out from the parliamentary affairs minister and the leader of the house whether the prime minister is making a statement on the issue. This did not satisfy the members who demanded that they should be told the exact time as to when the prime minister would be making the statement. When the deputy chairperson's repeated appeals to restore order were not heard, she adjourned the house for the day.

Dialogue Possible If Work Stops

BK2307164392 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The prime minister says he will be in a position to begin the process of dialogue with all concerned with the Ayodhya dispute only after the ongoing construction work comes to a halt. Mr. Narasimha Rao conveyed this to a delegation of the temple construction committee which met him in New Delhi this evening. The talks lasted more than an hour. The prime minister explained to the religious leaders the grave situation arising out of the noncompliance of the court orders by the Uttar Pradesh government on construction activity.

Later, talking to newsmen, the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad—World Hindu Council] leader, Acharya Giriraj Kishore, described the talks as a step forward in resolving the deadlock. He said the religious leaders will have further deliberations among themselves in Ayodhya tomorrow. He, however, made it clear that the kar seva [voluntary work for temple construction] will continue. Replying to a question, the Acharya said the talks with the prime minister will continue though no dates have been fixed. He said after the meeting, the religious leaders felt that the prime minister is making very sincere and serious efforts to solve the Ayodhya issue. The delegation handed over a memorandum to the prime minister signed by 54 religious leaders. The six-member religious leaders delegation which met the prime minister at his invitation included Sant Vamdev, Pramahans Ramchandraji, Mahant Avadhyanath, Mahant Vishes Tirath and Mr. Nitya Gopal Das. They also met senior BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Mr. L.K. Advani, and Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee along with the VHP leader in the afternoon.

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs [CCPA] is meeting tonight to take stock of the situation. The CCPA also met earlier in the day immediately after the talks by the prime minister with the religious leaders.

V.P. Singh Favors Reconciliation

BK2307163892 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The Janata Dal leader, Mr. V.P. Singh, has called for national reconciliation on the Ayodhya issue. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi today, he said that such an effort should uphold the Constitution and judiciary and take care of the sentiments of both the majority and minority communities. Mr. Singh said while negotiations continue, the court order should not be violated. He said Ram is a national hero and a temple for him should be built through national reconciliation. The Janata Dal president, Mr. S.R. Bommai, who was also present, alleged that the government has abdicated the executive responsibility by waiting for the court to bail it out. He said the indecision of the government sends a wrong signal to the nation.

BJP Leader Hopes Work Continues

BK2407032692 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader Mr. L.K. Advani has expressed the hope that the Supreme Court order on the Ayodhya issue will be fully implemented following the talks between the prime minister and the delegation of the temple construction committee in New Delhi yesterday. He was speaking to newsmen at the reception hosted by the outgoing president Mr. R. Venkataraman in New Delhi. According to PTI [PRESS TRUST OF INDIA], Mr. Advani also expressed the hope that the Kar Seva [voluntary work for temple construction] will continue. As already reported, the religious leaders will have further deliberations among themselves on their talks with the prime minister in Ayodhya today. The prime minister told the delegation yesterday that he will be in the position to begin the process of dialogue with all concerned to the dispute only after the ongoing construction work comes to a halt. The delegation from Ayodhya also met senior BJP leaders Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Mr. L.K. Advani, and Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee yesterday. The CPI-M [Congress Party of India—Marxist] says that it will welcome any reasonable negotiated settlement of the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute. In a statement in New Delhi last night, the party General Secretary Mr. Harkishan Singh Surjeet said that the settlement should be to the satisfaction of all concerned. Meanwhile, our correspondent in Ayodhya reports that there is no letup in the construction work at the Shilanyas [temple foundation] site. The situation in Ayodhya is normal. The union Home Minister Mr. S.B. Chavan called on the President Mr. R. Venkataraman at Rashtrapati Bhavan [Presidential Residence] in New Delhi yesterday. Mr. Chavan is understood to have briefed the president on the center's efforts to break the deadlock over the Ayodhya imbroglio. The home minister also informed the president of the progress of the talks being held with various parties involved in the dispute.

Commentary Sees Hope

BK2407050592 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Commentary by political commentator M.L. Kotru]

[Text] Only the other day, all hell seems to have broken loose. It looked as though the situation would go out of control any time and up to a point some of the fears seemed legitimate. All the elements that could have led to a conflagration were present. Arrayed on one side were the seers and the devout fired by religious zeal who legitimately believed that they had every right to raise a temple at the birthplace of Lord Ram. On the other side of the divide stood those who equally fervently believed that the temple could not be built there because the site was home also to the five-centuries-old Babri Masjid [mosque]. The prophets of doom predicted a confrontation. The central government and the prime minister in particular were accused of ambivalence, vacillation, and even worse. Orders of the Supreme Court and the Allahabad High Court had been apparently disregarded by the volunteers preparing the ground for the temple to come. Worse still, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister was unable to enforce the earlier directives of the high court.

Yet, in the end it seems good sense has or will prevail. The prime minister, who was accused of dithering, suddenly appeared to be acting purposefully and with conviction. The seers and the devout, who only yesterday were breathing fire and brimstone insisting that no one could stop construction of the temple, suddenly decided to be reasonable. They saw the light, as it were. Now, seers, our lord tells us, take time to see the light. And, to the prime minister's credit, it must be said that he used a senior seer to bring the light closer. Syed Shahabuddin of the Babri Masjid Action Committee responded handsomely saying let there be a temple at Ayodhya, but not at the cost of the Babri Masjid. And, as of this moment it seems that this is how the prime minister, too, would like to see the crisis resolved. The issue, as the antagonists now seem to realize, is not whether the temple should be there or not, but that the mosque can coexist beside the temple of the dreams of the devout.

Parties Must 'Act With Wisdom'

BK2307142192 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 23 Jul 92

[O.P. Sabhrewal commentary]

[Text] A critical and sensitive situation has been reached in the Ayodhya Mandir-Masjid [temple-mosque] dispute which has rocked parliament for two days. The entire nation has been waiting with bated breath for the Supreme Court's interpretation and verdict on vital aspects of this question for these could shape national cohesion and protect integrity. That momentous projection of the Supreme Court has come. Not a final verdict, but an interim order. By this action, the Supreme Court opens the way for ending the dispute in a fair and reasonable manner, accommodating all parties to the dispute.

There are two facets of the Supreme Court decision. The first is an unambiguous injunction by the Supreme Court directing the Uttar Pradesh [UP] government to bring about immediate stoppage of construction activity at the present site in Ayodhya. The second aspect of the court ruling comes into operation once the UP government ensures compliance to the court order and reports accordingly to the Supreme Court by today. It will proceed to examine the dispute in fullness from all divergent points of view helping to pave the way for a reasonable settlement. The court will obviously apply the healing touch to bring about conciliation rather than handout of verdict, which is one-sided.

The ball is therefore in the court of the UP government, which has been asked by the Supreme Court to ensure

compliance within a day and report back to the court. The implication is that the UP government will find the necessary means to influence the parties engaged in the ongoing construction activity at Ayodhya for cessation of the work on the site at Ayodhya. This inference is not beyond reasonable prospects of materializing, considering that the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad—World Hindu Council] which is at the helm of this construction has the same (?roots) as a ruling party in UP—the BJP.

The salutary impact of the Supreme Court order is already beginning to manifest itself. On the one hand, the UP government has come forward with an appeal to the center to assist it in finding out ways for compliance with the Supreme Court order. In other words, help in bringing about cessation of construction activity at Ayodhya. On the other hand, there are welcome consultations going on between the principal groups engaged in the construction work—the VHP, sadhus, and devotees—to find a way to comply with the Supreme Court's directive. One has to wait and watch. This is a moment of great consequence for the nation. One expects the UP government, the center, as well as the parties involved in the Ayodhya issue to act with wisdom and sagacity, because vital issues are stake.

Congress-I Accuses V.P. Singh of Ignoring 'Scam'

BK2307165092 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The Congress-I has demanded the resignation of Mr. V.P. Singh from the Lok Sabha, alleging that the Janata Dal government headed by him in 1990 failed to act despite full knowledge about the stock exchange scam going on at that time. Talking to newsmen in New Delhi today, the party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, said financial irregularities in Bank of Karad and the stock exchange were brought to the notice of the then government by the Janata Dal [word indistinct] secretary, Mr. Shantilal Patel, MP. He had written two letters to then finance minister, Professor Madhu Dandavate, mentioning the involvement of some of the now main accused in security scam including Mr. Harshad Mehta.

UP Government To Scrap Minorities Commission

BK2207083092 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] The Uttar Pradesh [UP] government has decided to scrap the Minorities Commission and to establish a human rights commission in its place. The commission will be headed by a retired judge. It will be empowered to look into violation of human rights of the scheduled castes, tribes, minorities, women and children. The commission will also look into the cases atrocities on the weaker section and will suggest remedial measures.

Advanced Form of Armored Combat Vehicle Developed

BK2407094292 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Indian defense scientists have developed an advanced form of armored combat vehicle that can carry and launch Trishul, Akash, and Nag range of missiles. The infantry combat vehicle, named Sath, has been innovatively modified by the scientists at the Avadi-based Combat Vehicle Research and Development Establishment. The vehicle has also been designed to suit the new generation missile system that will be inducted into the Armed Forces in the next few years.

Scientists Prepare for Polar Satellite Launch

BK2307164692 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Indian space scientists have accomplished a major task in the preparations for launching the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV. According to an official press release, the PSLV's high-energy solid propellant third-stage rocket motor has been successfully test fired for the sixth time at Sriharikota.

Pakistan Army's 'Sweeping Powers' Criticized

BK2307153892 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 23 Jul 92

[A.C. Pandya commentary]

[Text] The law and order situation in Pakistan authorities [as heard] is deteriorating. The new ordinance promulgated by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan not only applies retroactively from 28 May 1992 when the Army began (?deployment) in Sindh in preparation for the operation to silence the voice of Sindhi freedom fighters under the name of criminals and terrorists. It also provides sweeping powers which immune the Army from any legal proceedings in any court. This means that all actions undertaken by Army have been accorded legal cover. Among other things, the Army officers will have the power to search and arrest anyone to effectively deal with so-called criminals. Under the ordinance, no person doing any act in good faith shall be deemed to have thereby committed an offense and no prosecution shall be instituted against any officer or soldier, sailor or airman in the armed forces, except with the sanction of the federal government. [sentence as heard]

The Army has now been empowered to arrest without warrant those who have committed cognizable offenses including murder, dacoity [robbery] et cetera, or a proclaimed offender or who enters into armed encounter with the troops or against whom there was reasonable evidence implicating them in crimes. The ordinance has a constitutionally-mandated life of 120 days.

Retired Justice Dorab Patel, chairman of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan on 26 April had described the situation in Pakistan as reminiscent of Central Europe

before the rise of fascism and Nazism. The fundamental rights of the people are blatantly violated and political opponents persecuted by arresting them on fabricated charges. The new pass given to the Army will worsen the situation. Commenting on the Sindh situation after August 6, 1990, the former judge of the Supreme Court, Mr. Dorab Patel, said the recent practice of indiscriminate arrests for political reasons was a sign of prevailing darkness at noon in the province. More than 1,000 persons were picked up at one night on false criminal charges and subjected to torture to extract confessions from them.

Religious intolerance in the country had risen to alarming proportions because of discriminatory laws such as Hudud [Islamic punishment] ordinance against non-Muslims and women. According to the former judge of the Supreme Court, Pakistan has started giving the look of apartheid in South Africa. The annual general body meeting of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in Lahore passed a resolution deploring large-scale prosecution of critics of the government in Sindh, depriving people of their constitutional rights and liberty on fabricated charges.

People's confidence in the constitutional mechanism is on the wane because of the killing of innocent persons in the province by the law enforcing agencies, political elements, and hardened criminals, it added. It decried continued horse-trading in Sindh and exhorted the authorities to play their due role to bring normalcy in the province. The commission viewed with serious concern the rising trend of gang rape which has plagued society and created a sense of insecurity and despondency among people. The resolution demanded that timely and effective steps should be taken to institute impartial and high-powered inquiries into these heinous crimes to restore a sense of security and honor in the public.

Instead of redeeming the grievances of the people and reviving their faith in the established law, the government in Pakistan gave sweeping powers to Army with countrywide application. The formal green signal to use these powers was given in a high-level meeting of the country's top three—President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Premier Nawaz Sharif, and Chief of the Army General Asif Nawaz Janjua.

Persecution of Afghan Minorities Decried

BK2207134192 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 22 Jul 92

[P. Dasgupta commentary]

[Text] When the Najibollah regime in Kabul collapsed and the mojahedin armies marched into the Afghan capital to establish themselves in power, there was no assurance of an orderly changeover. The mojahedin's two principal aims have been achieved. The Soviet forces had left and without their support President Najibollah had fallen. But the mojahedin had failed to think out an answer to the important question—what then? Their leaders, over a dozen of them heading as many bands, could not prepare themselves for the positive task of keeping a shadow government ready to fill the gap whenever the loss of the Soviet-bolstered administration fell.

The experiment of a goverment-in-exile failed because of the leaders who were hopelessly divided. They were not above maneuvering against one another and their followers sometime engaged in intra-mojahedin fighting. Kabul had, therefore, to brace itself up for some confused warfare by the mojahedin among themselves at just a time when the long Afghan civil war had ended. Trigger happiness of some of the former guerrilla gunmen made the situation worse for the Afghan people. Innocent men and women were caught on the cross fire and their property made the target of armed looters. Various rivalry surfaced in sinister forms. In such unsettled times, the affected people take a certain look at their future, if they can afford to do so and try to make it more secure.

Some Hindus and Sikhs, who made Afghanistan their home and had become Afghan citizens, have lately made their way to India and are complaining of a campaign of terror against them making life impossible for them in the country of their adoption. Tales are being told of murder and mayhem against non-Muslims in the wake of the triumph for fundamentalist island [as heard] in Afghanistan. Thousands of Hindus and Sikhs are said to be looking desperately for ways to leave their country. They hold Afghan passports and need visas to come to India.

There are cases in recent history of ethnic Indians leaving the country of their residence in large numbers. In the mid 60's, a deliberate policy of the Government of Burma of squeezing them out led to an exodus of people of Indian origin from Burma and very soon after ethnic Indians streamed out of Uganda because the authorities there would no longer tolerate the Indians' hold over domestic trade. In Afghanistan, there is no conclusive evidence yet of a calculated policy of the new rulers to rid their country of Hindus and Sikhs, the only religious minorities. At one time, there were a few hundred Jews, but they have virtually disappeared.

The ethnic Indians do not make a large community in Afghanistan. Some estimates place their strength at 20,000 and some others at 30,000. The earliest of these people went there perhaps in about the 20's of the last century when the Sikhs under maharaja [emperor] Ranjit Singh captured Peshawar. Some Sikhs in Kabul say that they have been living there for generations. After the partition of India in 1947, some Hindus and Sikhs of the Northwest Frontier Province chose to migrate to Islamic Afghanistan than to India. They set themselves up as successful traders in the markets of Kabul, Qandahar, Jalalabad, and even small towns. They have remained thoroughly apolitical. It is true that the mojahedin leaders were unhappy with the Government of India, because it was friendly toward the Najibollah regime they were fighting against.

The Afghan citizens of Indian origin bear no responsibility for New Delhi's Afghan policy. But a suspicion perhaps lurks in some minds they will be made to pay for it. The ethnic Indians must also have suffered in the breakdown of law and order when the various mojahedin bands competed violently for power in Kabul. Many innoncent Afghan citizens were killed. In the anarchic conditions that prevailed and had still not been brought under control entirely, the aircraft of Mr. Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, the first head of the mojahedin's interim government, was fired upon. His successor, Mr. Borhanoddin Rabbani, narrowly escaped death by a rocket hit and saw one of his bodyguards die. Conditions in Afghanistan are admittedly unsettled. Mr. Rabbani has himself spoken of the need for defending the property and dignity of the people against looters and murderers. There is no evidence, at least not yet, of any community being singled out for persecution. The official spokesman of the Government of India also says that the External Affairs Ministry has no reports of Hindus and Sikhs being made special targets by the lawless elements in Afghanistan.

10,000 Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees Want to Return

BK2307081492 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] About 10,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu have expressed their willingness to go back to Sri Lanka. The commissioner of revenue administration told newsmen in Tanjavur that the government is taking steps to send the refugees back. He said over 23,000 refugees had already been sent back. At present, nearly 88,000 refugees are in various camps in Tamil Nadu.

Asian Development Bank To Provide $1 Billion

BK2307161092 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The Asian Development Bank [ADB] will provide $1 billion worth of loans to India this year. This will be a $100 million more than last year. The vice president of ADB, Mr. William Thomson, told our Southeast Asia correspondent, Nallamuthu, in Manila today that the loans will increase by 10 percent in the next few years.

Iran

White House Seen To Need 'International Success'

NC2207155492 Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian 12 Jul 92 p 4

[Part one of an unspecified number of installments from the "Strategic Discussions" column by Hoseyn Puya: "Game of Cards"]

[Excerpts] America's political games in the Middle East and Central Asia have entered a new phase. Three recent incidents—the declaration of a government in Iraqi Kurdistan, the appearance of Ataturk's ghost in the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, and the end of the Ozal era in Turkey—should each be studied on their own. These three incidents should be assessed within the framework of a series of political equations. Because such developments inevitably take place with an objective in mind, their different aspects should be observed and studied.

The declaration of a government in Iraqi Kurdistan can be studied from various angles. The first is the requirements of time and international conditions; the second is where this issue could lead; and the third is regional and world reaction. The requirements of time and international conditions are based on two principles. The first is the principle of temporary interests, and the second is the principle of interests that go beyond the problems of the region's people. Not many people think that developments in Iraq—at least in the year since the Persian Gulf war—have been influenced by the new objectives in U.S. foreign policy. There is great pressure on Bush and the Republicans four months before the U.S. presidential election, and if the U.S. Administration can achieve a series of successes in foreign policy, it will strengthen its extremely weak position. These issues are in no way linked with the general strategic policies of the U.S. Administration.

Exploiting situations to solve immediate problems is standard procedure in American political rivalries, and the players usually stick to the rules of the game. The current rulers in the White House need an international success, and Bush has chosen three areas in which to find one.

The first is pressuring Russia's Yeltsin to finish agreements on advanced nuclear weapons. [passage omitted]

The second is exploiting Iraq's domestic problems. Scowcroft recently promised that Saddam's government will be toppled before the U.S. presidential election. With his numerous interviews, Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Edward Djerejian wants to show that the U.S. Government has practical plans for overthrowing Saddam. In parallel, we hear news of a coup in Iraq. If we add the increasing amount of news about Iraq and the organized statements by some Iraqi officials on reviving territorial claims against Kuwait and on the need to unite the country, we can see that the White House is using all its tools to create yet another artificial crisis. America's most important card is forming a government in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The timing of the news on this issue and the news on the trip by a delegation of Kurdish rebels to America shows that this is a complicated game. The third area is one in which the White House has less maneuverability than in the two previous areas—the mechanism of Iranian-U.S. relations. The White House is very keen to see a notable development in this field so that it can justify its acts to the American public. Baker's statements followed by Djerejian's prove this point. Predictions are that in the near future, America will start to pave the propaganda

path for this issue so that it can display its decisiveness. This is the angle from which our silence can be useful.

Commentary Views U.S. 'Collusion' with Iraq

LD2407095192 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1030 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] With the nearing of the U.S. presidential elections, the electoral campaign is assuming wider dimensions in that country. In this campaign, Democratic Party supporters, in their confrontation with U.S. President George Bush, are revealing further details of U.S.-Iraqi collusion in the Ba'thist imposed eight-year war against Iran.

Now, following the revelations made by the ABC television network and NEWSWEEK two weeks ago—to the effect that America, in a bid to prevent Iranian victory in the war, apart from an exchange of military intelligence with Baghdad—also embarked on a secret war against Iran.

Henry Gonzales [name as heard], a Democrat and chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Banking and Financial Affairs Committee, made some other disclosures. Addressing the House Committee Tuesday and citing a number of classified documents, he accused the Bush Administration of being aware of Saddam's extensive program on production of weapons of mass destruction at least one year prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and also of facilitating such an effort in some cases. In this connection, the NEW YORK TIMES wrote: Among the equipment sold to Iraq with the consent of the U.S. Administration was a photography system of very high speed.

Meanwhile Les Aspen [as heard], a Democrat and chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Armed Forces Committee, too, in order to probe the charges leveled in ABC's Night Line program of July 1st, summoned Admiral William Crowe, former chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the committee. Crowe presented himself before the committee last Tuesday and reiterated that the U.S. warship Vincennes was within Iran's territorial waters when it missiled an Iranian airliner four years ago. In justification of this act he stated: A warship, while defending itself, is entitled, under the international law, to enter the aggressor's territorial waters. But he did not explain as to how Vincennes could have been threatened by a passenger plane gaining height and flying in an air corridor.

In the opinion of political observers even though revelation of these reports depicts only a part of the total U.S.-Iraqi collusion during the eight-year imposed war, it will provide some very good reasons for the world public opinion to once again discern the rightfulness of Iranian postures.

Now, with the revelation by U.S. official of the details of the collusion of the world powers with Iraq, it will no more be any reason for doubt in this regard while mooting of such issues during the war related to a collusion at such a vast level aimed at defeating the progress of the Islamic Revolution in Iran created doubts in the public mind.

Presently, this question is mooted: Have such collusions come to an end following the termination of the imposed war? All evidence acquired so far reveals that those collusions continued until a few days prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. This point in itself denotes that the ring-leaders of White House resort to any move in order to secure their arrogant designs. On this very ground, certain observers believe that despite the UN sanction against Iraq, America, in order to prevent the collapse of Saddam and coming to power of U.S. opponents in Baghdad, has continued its clandestine aid to Saddam even after Iraq's defeat in the Persian Gulf War and in the course of the popular uprising of the Iraqi people, so as to avoid the certain collapse.

Iraqi Regime Said Forcing Out Marshland Residents

LD2307131192 Tehran IRNA in English 1114 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 23, IRNA—The Iraqi regime has resorted to a new plan to force out its Arab opponents from the marshlands by pumping out the waters of the marshes in al-Amarah Province, it was disclosed here Thursday.

Sources close to the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI), said if Baghdad succeeds in its sinister plan to dry out al-'Amarah marshes, over 200,000 local residents would face drought and death not to speak of the irreparable damage to ecology.

Following Tuesday's heavy military attacks on the marshlands, SAIRI sent a letter to the UN secretary general drawing the world body's attentions to its responsibilities towards the people of southern Iraq, in the light of UN resolutions.

The Baghdad regime, making use of international ignorance and indifference, has changed southern Iraq into "real hell" pounding the defenseless people with heavy armaments and explosives, said the letter.

On Tuesday Saddam Husayn's forces launched a heavy attack on the southern marshlands killing a number of children and women and injuring many others as well as destroying and burning many houses.

According to last reports, the attacking forces have lost 300 troops and have failed to make a dent in the resistance of the defenders who have dug in inside the dense marshes following the brutal repression of the popular uprising which swept Iraq in March 1991.

Thirty Killed in Attacks

LD2307173592 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Iraqi regime fighter aircraft and military helicopters dropped hundreds of bombs and missiles on the residents of the marshes of al-'Amarah Province in southern Iraq. The bombing started yesterday afternoon and continued until this morning.

According to the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], 30 women and children lost their lives as a result of these attacks in the al-Askar region alone. According to the same report, the al-'Amarah marshlands have been under constant attack by the Iraqi regime's fighter planes, helicopters, and heavy artillery. According to SAIRI, the number of victims of the new onslaught of the Iraqi regime continues to rise.

MP Cited on Not Normalizing Ties With Egypt

LD2307150592 Tehran IRNA in English 1334 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 23, IRNA—In the opinion of a member of parliament [MP] the current conditions does not warrant normalization of ties with Husni Mubarak's Egypt.

"Time will tell whether or not Egypt will be able to press for a new collective Camp David Accord, and only then should a decision be taken," Mohammad Javad Larijani said in his weekly political commentary in the Persian daily ETTELA'AT Thursday.

Larijani maintained that Egypt's ruling government is not less hostile to Islam than the Zionists. "In my opinion (President) Husni Mubarak has opened an account for Zionist assistance and intervention in order to preserve himself," he added.

At present, he said, Israel was not afraid of its Arab neighbours militarily or politically but rather its main fear stems from a resurgent Islam.

"The Zionist regime fears the day when Muslims can set up legitimate Islamic governments in Egypt, Jordan and other countries of the region," he said.

The one time deputy foreign minister pointed out that the Zionist regime has not seen in any other movement anything, like what it sees in the Intifadah in Palestine, nor has it seen on any battlefield what it sees in the Islamic movement in Lebanon.

Earlier, First Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati had ruled out resumption of ties with Egypt, and also dismissed reports carried by some Arabic dailies that the Egyptian foreign minister was to visit Islamic Iran in August.

Turkmen Envoy Presents Credentials to Velayati

LD2307153692 Tehran IRNA in English 1500 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 23, IRNA—Turkmenistan's new ambassador to Tehran Atta Charyyers today presented a copy of his credentials to Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

Turkmen Deputy Foreign Minister Valiov, who was also present at the meeting, said the appointment of the former vice-president, Charyyers, as ambassador to Tehran showed the importance that Turkmenistan attached to Tehran-Ashkhabad relations.

Turkmenistan, he said, is thankful to Iran for its training of ten Turkmen diplomats.

Velayati said common interests consolidated Tehran-Ashkhabad relations and Iran wanted to expand mutual relations.

They surveyed grounds of cooperation in the region, especially economic cooperation within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Air Link With Turkmenistan Established

LD2207121892 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] An air link was established between Iran and Turkmenistan with the first Tehran-Ashkhabad Iran Air flight, which took place at 1025, Tehran time, today.

According to a Central News Unit correspondent dispatched to Ashkhabad, the Turkmen foreign minister expressed pleasure at the establishment of the air link between Tehran and Ashkhabad and said: Iran has given Turkmenistan a great deal of help towards her independence.

At the ceremony to inaugurate the first Iran Air flight to Ashkhabad, Mr. Shafti, managing director of the Islamic Republic Airlines, described the establishment of the air link between Iran and Turkmenistan as a factor in expanding cooperation between both countries.

From now on there will be a flight from Tehran to Ashkhabad every Tuesday.

President, Nigeria's Olagunji View African Unity

LD2307125292 Tehran IRNA in English 1217 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 23, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani Thursday stressed on the importance African unity under the present world conditions, saying that alien and opportunist states would take advantage of any discord and clashes.

In a meeting with visiting Nigerian Minister of Interior Tunji Olagunji, who submitted President Ibrahim

Babangida's message, the Hojjat-ol-Eslam warned that differences among African states would entail negative impacts for all Africa. He emphasized on the territorial integrity of Sudan which is facing insurgency in the south, and said that Iran will help Nigerian mediatory measures to restore peace and stability to that country.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani praised efforts of President Babangida in this regard, saying that continuation of clashes in southern Sudan was neither in the interest of the parties concerned nor Africa as a whole. He also called for cooperation and exchange of views among leaders of member countries of the Nonaligned Movement [NAM] before the tenth NAM Summit starts in Jakarta in September.

Olagunji, who arrived here Tuesday, termed as 'vital' Iran's role at the movement, and said cooperation and coordination among member states especially Nigeria and Iran was of 'great importance' to uplift the forthcoming NAM Summit. He also conveyed Babangida's call for Iran's assistance to restore peace and tranquility in southern Sudan.

In a separate meeting today, Olagunji discussed with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati promotion of Tehran-Lagos ties and latest world developments. He also briefed him on the current political developments in Nigeria and the forthcoming elections there. Iran's assistance to the African people including support for the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) came in for praise from the Nigerian minister.

Velayati voiced the willingness of the Islamic Republic for expansion of cooperation and ties with African states and underlined the necessity of preserving the unity, independence and territorial integrity of African countries. He said the African nations should solve their own problems.

ANC's Mandela Continues Visit 21 Jul

Meets Hashemi-Rafsanjani

LD2107175792 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 21 Jul 92

[Text] African National Congress [ANC] leader Nelson Mandela and members of his delegation met President Hashemi-Rafsanjani this afternoon. Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani thanked the ANC president for visiting Iran and praised his long struggles against racism and tyranny. The president stated: The Iranian people value the struggles of the victimized people of Africa and sympathize with them. We are very happy to see that Muslims have an important role in the struggle against apartheid. We also continue to follow ANC activities. The president stated that the support given by the arrogant powers to the governing elite of the white minority in South Africa is a disgrace for self-appointed claimants of democracy. The president added: The oppressed and exploited people of South Africa can attain victory only through their own struggles; otherwise, the apartheid regime will maintain its greed and interests.

Concluding his remarks, the president stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to support the struggles of the South African people. Addressing Mr. Mandela, the president stated: We attach a great deal of importance to the fate of your people's struggles. We regard ourselves to be standing at your side in the arena of the struggle, because we believe that your struggles are right. Your struggles were great morale boosters for us before the victory of our revolution. While in the shah regime's prisons, we regarded ourselves as sharing the same trench with you. We have now liberated ourselves and attained victory before you and hope that the oppressed people of South Africa will soon attain their right objectives.

Mr. Mandela stated that he was happy to have visited the revolutionary country of Iran. He also praised the struggling and revolutionary personality of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeyni—may he be blessed by God.

Referring to the help given to the struggles of the people of South Africa since the beginning of the Islamic revolution, he stated: I thank the government and the people of Iran for their revolution and for their sympathy with the oppressed people of South Africa. Mr. Nelson Mandela also praised the principled policies and progressive positions of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the struggles of the people of South Africa.

He then submitted a report to our country's president about the ANC's activities on achieving freedom and respecting freedom for all faiths, as well as about recent developments in his country.

Imam Suleyman, one of the ulema and an oustanding Muslim leader of South Africa and an ANC member, who was also present at the meeting, stated: After Iran's Islamic revolution, many Muslims of South Africa realized that they should maximize their struggles to achieve freedom. That is why I am now an ANC member.

Addressing our country's president, he stated: I submit to your excellency the best greetings of the Muslims of South Africa, because our people have emulated their Muslim brothers and sisters in Iran; they realized that one should rise to achieve justice and one's unalienable rights and be ready to sacrifices one's life for that objective.

Discusses 'Struggle' With Khamene'i

LD2207153192 Tehran IRNA in English 1409 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 22, IRNA—The African National Congress [ANC] leader Nelson Mandela told the leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i here today that the victory of the Islamic Revolution inspired the South African people to continue their struggle against apartheid.

"The Islamic Revolution of Iran under the leadership of the late Imam Khomeyni has brought much hope for the uprising of the people of South Africa against injustice. No doubt, history will never forget the role of Islamic Iran," the ANC leader said.

Referring to the continuous assistance of the U.S. and Europe to the Pretoria regime, Mandela said the South African regime has been supported by Western countries since it came into existence. "But," he reiterated, "we will never ally with the backers of our enemy, nor will we rely on the West."

Ayatollah Khamene'i said under present conditions it was necessary for leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle to exert utmost efforts to bring the racist regime to its knees. To this end, he said, the people's presence in the scene will be the best and most effective way.

The leader of the Islamic Revolution also blasted the white minority regime now deciding the fate of the South African people, for using all its political and economic capabilities, coupled with political pressure and violence against people and for its efforts to sow discord among ethnic black communities in that country.

"The U.S. and big European Governments have no real motives for combating racism, and the shameful survival of the South African regime has been possible thanks to the backing of Europe and America," Ayatollah Khamene'i pointed out.

"However," the revered Ayatollah noted, "the Muslim people and Government of Iran will continue their political and spiritual support for the justice-seeking struggles of people in that country unconditionally, hoping that the time would come for South Africa to become free, independent and be ruled by the people."

Remarks on Security Council Measures

LD2307154992 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in English 1315 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] The leader of the African National Congress (ANC), Mr. Nelson Mandela, wound up his three day official visit to Iran and left Tehran this morning. Prior to his departure, Mr. Mandela had an exclusive interview with our correspondent:

[Correspondent] Mr. Mandela, its from IRIB English news. Regarding your latest remarks about the UN, what measures would you like to see the Security Council take regarding the current situation in your country.
[Mandela] Our resolution asked for appointing a special representative of the secretary general to go to South Africa to investigate what has happened. His mandate is to investigate the violence, and he has no authority to mediate between the ANC and the regime. He is going there just to do...find out what is happening. He will then go back to the United Nations to report his findings. The United Nations will then decide what measure should be taken. What has been suggested is that there should be a joint monitoring group involving the United Nations, the OAU, the British Commonwealth, and the EC. I have asked the Organization of the Islamic Conference to join that mission so that we should have a properly represented, impartial, and objective monitoring group. (?Also the measures which are going to follow).

[Correspondent] Thank you very much. And considering your visit and talks with Iranian officials, would you briefly comment about your dialogues with Iranian officials?

[Mandela] Well, I thanked them for the support that the government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the support that they have given our struggle since the revolution. And I have also briefed them, as I briefed your excellencies here, about the latest political developments in our country, and I asked them to continue giving us the help and the support that they gave us in the past.

[Correspondent] What kind of support do you wish the Iranian officials would give to your country regarding the antiracist movement?

[Mandela] Well, first you must understand that Iran is an Islamic republic. And as I understand Islam, it is totally against all forms of racial oppression, and they are among the best allies to help us in the fight against racism, which is enshrined in their religion. And they also have undertaken to give all forms of assistance which we may require.

[Correspondent] What kind of assistance would you wish?

[Mandela] A wide variety of assistance. First, our demand now is for installing an interim government that will represent everybody. They fully support that demand. We also wanted to train people, because if we are looking forward to democratic changes in our country, we must have the people who are going to defend those democratic gains. And they have undertaken to help us in training our people, both educationally and otherwise.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much.

[Mandela] You are welcome.

Expresses Willingness To Resume Talks

MB2307084692 Johannesburg SABC TV 1 Network in English 0500 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] ANC [African National Congress] leader Nelson Mandela expressed his willingness to resume talks with the South African Government. Speaking in Tehran, Mr. Mandela described President F.W. de Klerk as a racist and said his organization would resume negotiations with the government if it showed goodwill. Mr. Mandela, who is in Teheran on an official visit, was awarded an honorary doctorate from the city's university, becoming the first foreigner to receive the honor since 1979.

Departs After 'Successful' Visit

LD2307083292 Tehran IRNA in English 0640 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 23, IRNA—Leader of the African National Congress [ANC] Nelson Mandela wound up his three-day official visit to the Islamic Republic and left here Thursday morning.

Mandela was seen off at the airport by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and other senior officials.

Prior to his departure, Mandela told IRNA that his visit to Iran was "successful" adding that "I am glad and satisfied with my visit to Iran and talks with Iranian officials."

He expressed hope to despatch ANC delegations to Iran in future.

The ANC leader said the latest reforms carried out by the apartheid South African regime are "important" but "not sufficient" adding that the masses must take part in the future system of the country.

Mandela reiterated that he would resume talks with the apartheid regime only if Pretoria pays attention to the majority black population, sets a date for formation of the transitional government and stops violence.

Also speaking to reporters, Velayati lauded Mandela as a prominent leader of the African continent respected by the Iranian nation and who enjoys high popularity among them.

He added that more talks and exchange of delegations will take place in future and that solid bases for bilateral cooperation were laid down during the visit.

Velayati said the Islamic Republic authorities gave a positive response to Mandela's request for continued support by Iran to the aspiration of the South African people, the black majority in particular.

Referring to the continued struggle of the Islamic Republic against the apartheid regime and in favor of the blacks, the foreign minister said that Iran has assured Mandela to support his policies in international forums and publicize them in the mass media.

The ANC leader during his visit obtained a more realistic view of the Islamic Republic, Velayati pointed out adding that a more profound sympathy was created between Mandela and the Iranian authorities during the trip. He expressed hope that the visit will lay the foundation for new relations between Iran and the South African people in the future.

Mandela arrived here Tuesday at the invitation of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

While here he met with leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, President Rafsanjani, science and higher education minister, Majles speaker and other high ranking officials.

On Wednesday the ANC leader Nelson Mandela was granted an honorary doctorate in political science by the Tehran University in a ceremony held here in gratitude for his continuous efforts towards achievement of the rights of the African people.

The ceremony was attended by Minister of Science and Higher Education Mostafa Mo'in, a number of other ministers, parliament members, academicians and professors.

This is the first time that an honarary doctorate is granted by an Iranian University to a distinguished figure since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.

Addressing the ceremony, Mo'in said, "today our university is witnessing the meeting of the country's university professors and students with a conscious and persecuted combatant from the African continent...."

"According to a cardinal principle of Islam God has taken a pledge from men of learning not to praise oppresssors and assist the poor and needy," the minister noted. He added, "it is due to this purpose that the sense of duty and commitment towards the society and the deprived becomes inseparable from the concept of learning in Islam."

He said, "today's reality in the under-developed world attests that accomplishment of a successful system of higher education lies in its ability to interlink with the interests and fundamental requirements of the national and international order."

"The unfortunate 'brain drain' phenomenon in today's pillaged societies or the propagation and infusion of colonial programs in the context of scientifically justified concepts and the abuse of knowledge and research are [words indistinct].

Mandela, highly praised by the joyful audience after receiving the doctorate, lauded the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeyni as one of the greatest combatant and religious figures of the world who has initiated a powerful move in the region.

Mandela said that his pilgrimage to the holy shrine of the late Imam Khomeyni which took [words indistinct].

He added that the Islamic Revolution of Iran will be a pattern for the whole world, the African continent in particular.

The black leader thanked the Tehran University for presenting him the honorary doctorate and wished success and victory for his nation.

Yesterday, Mandela also held talks with Majles Speaker Hojjat-ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri who reiterated that Iran [words indistinct]. "You too, based on your own revolutionary experiences, should invest no hope in Washington."

Mandela praised Tehran for its efforts to establish [words indistinct] but expressed concern towards the situation of the Iranian hostages held by phalangists in Lebanon.

"We are sure that we will achieve full victory (in South Africa) within the next three months," Mandela stressed.

The Majles Speaker said Iran is proud of the fact that the South African Muslims are fighting against apartheid alongside with the ANC and that a number of them have been martyred for their cause.

While here Mandela also held a meeting with the Diplomatic Corps in Tehran and called on the freedom-loving [words indistinct] help the ANC in materializing the achievement of the rights of the oppressed South African blacks and stopping the massacre and plunder of the blacks by the apartheid regime through employment of appropriate means.

Memorandum of Understanding Signed With Libya

LD2307222992 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] This morning at the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, the last committee session for following up the memorandum of understanding of the fourth joint commission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah and the Islamic Republic of Iran signed a memorandum on speeding up implementation of contents of the fourth memorandum of understanding of the Iranian and Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah joint commission.

In this memorandum, industrial cooperation; commercial exchange; both countries' cooperation in the fields of banking, oil, transportation, agriculture, cultural publicity, and scientific and training research; urban service centers; and technical and professional training were stressed.

Majles Denounces Muslim 'Genocide' in Bosnia

LD2307103192 Tehran IRNA in English 0859 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 16, IRNA—The governing board of the Majles (parliament) in a statement issued Wednesday, denounced the genocide of Muslims in Bosnia-Hercegovinia (B-H) by the Christian Serbs and the "unjustifiable" silence of world bodies towards the crime.

It also condemned collaboration of the Zionists with the "criminal Serbs" as "catastrophic developments" in the Muslim populated European republic.

The board comprising the speaker, the vice-speakers and the secretaries, called on the international organisations in general and the security council in particular to carry out their duties in defending and safeguarding the rights of world people regardless of the policies and interests of the arrogant powers.

Referring to the "identical similarity" between the crimes being committed by the Serbs in the Balkans and by the Zionists in occupied Palestine, it urged Islamic countries and Muslims to unveil this ominous conspiracy.

Islamic countries were also asked to help Muslims in this Muslim populated republic by any possible means without any delay.

It said the destruction being wrought on the economic-industrial sites in B-H is apparently a plan to turn this European Muslim republic into a debris.

"All these medieval crimes are taking place right before the eyes of the United States and Europe while international bodies content themselves with mere statements that lack teeth," said the board.

It also lashed out at the "inhuman statements" released by Washington that American interests would not be jeopardised in B-H.

"The reality is that the Serbs cannot carry out such brutal acts without explicit guarantees from the U.S. and the capitalist system of the West," said the Majles.

It cited as "proof in this regard" the U.S. objection to a joint UN Security Council and European Community (EC) decision for military measures to stop the Muslim massacre, is a proof to this.

"The capitalist West seems intent to destroy all the potentials of the Islamic world which, inspired by the Islamic revolution and the dynamic thoughts of its founder the late Imam Khomeyni, poses a challenge to the U.S. and its idea of the new world order," it said.

"What is happening today in B-H and what would happen in future, should be assessed according to this view. These developments have close connections with the goals and intentions of the U.S. Including the dismembering of relatively larger and powerful countries of the so-called south bloc by bloody and sometimes 'peaceful' ways.

"The U.S. and the criminal West should know that these fascist and abortive policies would lead nowhere, and despite the silence of the Western mass media vis-a-vis the realities of these brutal massacres, the shouts of Allah-o-akbar (god is greatest) will be chanted by all the freedom-loving people of the world," concluded the statement.

Velayati, France's Dumas View Bosnian Muslims

LD2307133692 Tehran IRNA in English 1135 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 23, IRNA—In a telephone contact today, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and his French counterpart Roland Dumas exchanged views on the situation of Muslims in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

The two foreign ministers also discussed boosting of Tehran-Paris relations and hoped to meet each other soon.

The mostly Muslim Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina is under attack from the Christian Serbs supported by the rump state of Yugoslavia, and despite the daily reports of Muslim genocide, the international community has done little to stop the Serbs.

Velayati, Indonesia's Siregar Meet 22 Jul

NC2207061992 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] Arifin Siregar, Indonesian commerce minister and special presidential emissary, met with Dr. Velayati in Tehran yesterday. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the Nonaligned Movement's [NAM] present position in the world and discussed ways and means of reinvigorating it. They stressed the importance of the upcoming Nonaligned Movement summit in Indonesia.

Siregar lauded Iran's effective and active role in the Nonaligned Movement and the need to strengthen and broaden economic and commercial cooperation among its members, saying: Expanding commercial ties between Iran and Indonesia is a conspicuous example of this kind of cooperation.

Saying that Iran has always attached special importance to the Nonaligned Movement, Dr. Velayati stressed Iran's willingness to cooperate with the Indonesian Government in making the Nonaligned Movement more active. He elaborated on the serious conditions of Muslims in Bosnia-Hercegovina, the Serbian crimes, and the measures Iran has taken to prevent the continuing massacre of Bosnia-Hercegovina's Muslims. He called for the Nonaligned Movement to play a more dynamic role.

Ayatollah Jannati Heads Friday Prayers

Discusses Virtue-Vice Campaign

LD2407105592 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Iranians held Friday prayers, the immortal Islamic rites, today at Friday prayer sites all over the country in a most glorious manner.

In Tehran, the prayer givers were massively present at Tehran University, where they held the Friday prayer under the leadership of Ayatollah Jannati, Tehran's ad hoc Friday prayers leader and one of the theologians of the Council of Guardians.

The prayer givers once again, in their slogans, called for massive presence of the Basiji forces on the country's reconstruction fields. They also called for the continued campaign against social vices and cultural attacks. They then declared their support for the important and fateful remarks of His Eminence Ayatollah Khamane'i, leader of the Islamic revolution.

Ayatollah Jannati based his sermons on the important religious duty of enjoining virtue and prohibiting vice as elaborated in the important remarks of the leader of the Islamic revolution. Explaining the objectives of this important pillar of Islam and ways and means of implementing it, he said: The most important objective of enjoining virtue and prohibiting vice is to reform the society. But what makes it even more important is the quality of the act: how one is to go about confronting those who have abandoned virtue.

Stressing the fact that every individual Muslim is duty-bound to enjoin virtue and prohibit vice, he said: We must eradicate the roots of vice. He recommended that the Basiji and Hezbollahi forces have firm documents and complete knowledge about vice when they confront it. He added that if they want to have success in their efforts, they must act in a sound and wise manner.

He added: It is essential for us to strengthen the presence of Basiji and Hezbollahi forces in the society, in the arena of reconstruction, and in campaigning against social vices. He stated that the instructions of the leader have to be implemented and that the performance of implementing those instructions must be assessed after the passage of one year.

Calls AIDS 'American Plague'

LD2407121992 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Second Friday Prayers sermon by Ayatollah Jannati at Tehran University in Tehran—live]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] The aim of propagating virtue and prohibiting vice is twofold: One is that one must reform those who commit vice. We must help them. We must not allow their pain to become chronic. We must not let them gradually become infested, beyond cure. Do not forget this point. [passage omitted]

The second aim of propagating virtue and prohibiting vice is reforming society. Let us assume that that person cannot be reformed; he does not listen to advice or anything. If that person openly indulges in fornication and debauchery, he will corrupt the society.

He may be afflicted with AIDS. Should we let him loose on society? Should we say: He cannot be reformed, so let him go and let him do what he likes? No, he must be

quarantined. He must be limited. He must be stopped. Spreading this disease must stop. These things are important.

Just look at this American plague. AIDS is a gift from America to the world. If any other country had done this, they would have made such a hue and cry that that country is backward or whatever. Such a disease has been found there. Oh people! Do not catch this disease. But America gave this disease to the so-called uncivilized world.

Now, if we find such a person, a person afflicted with AIDS, we will check him. If we cannot cure him, we will definitely put him in a place with no contact with the outside world. He will not have any contact with others; thus others will not be infected. [passage omitted]

Leadership Office on 'Revolutionary Conscience'

LD2207181592 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] After various strata of the people of our country sent in messages, announcements, and statements decisively supporting Ayatollah Khamene'i's recent remarks, the leadership's office considered today the declarations of support as indication of the community's religious and revolutionary conscience, political awareness, and willingness to safeguard and continue the revolution's spiritual and divine ideals. [passage omitted] The text of the leadership office's communique is as follows:

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful: We are all aware of the most important and momentus remarks of the exalted leader of the Islamic revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, during the mourning period of the lord of the martyrs and the leader of the world's free men, His Eminence 'Aba 'Abdollah al-Hoseyn [Imam Hoseyn], peace be upon him. His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i addressed a gathering of the brave Basijis about the need to learn a lesson from the great 'Ashura' incident, to safeguard the objectives, values, and ideals of Islam and the revolution, ensure the strong and effective presence of every individual member of the hezbollah ummah and the heroic Basiji forces in all arenas, and fulfill the most important religious duty of enjoining virtue and forbidding vice on the extensive scale of the community. The ulema, clerics, Friday prayers and congregation leaders, self-sacrificing Basijis, state and Army officials, establishments and organs, associations, and various strata of the hezbollah and martyr-rearing ummah have expressed their decisive support for those remarks by sending in messages, communiques, and statements. And they have declared their readiness to enact his wishes. Also, experts and the mass media have endeavored to elaborate on the remarks of the exalted leader of the Islamic revolution in speech and writing. Some action and moves also have been started in this regard by popular forces and relevant organs.

The exalted leadership, while stressing the continuation of such effective measures in attaining the desired results, thanked and praised all those who declared their readiness for the complete realization of the Islamic objectives and ideals and stressed that the declarations of support and the fervent moves indicate the religious and revolutionary conscience and political awareness of our community, which have always existed during all the stages of the revolution and, God willing, always will. Obviously the all-around popular presence and the realization of the religious duty of enjoining virtue and forbidding vice are not things that can be implemented merely by declarations of support. It is necessary for all the strata of the nation—whether the young, students, clerics, thinkers, orators and writers, government and judicial officials, military and security forces, revolutionary establishments and the mass media—to first find their exact duties and roles in this crucial matter and secondly to implement them with revolutionary commitment and sensitivity.

I beseech almighty God for everyone's success.

Bill on Managing Free Trade Zones Approved

LD2307082792 Tehran IRNA in English 0704 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 23, IRNA—A bill defining the management of industrial free trade zones of the country was approved by the cabinet in its session here Wednesday.

The bill deals with the regulations of "industrial and trade" activities in the said areas, details of which will be determined by the cabinet.

It calls for setting up of a high council, consisting of ten ministers, the head of the planning and budget organization and the Central Bank governor, to coordinate planning and other activities on the free trade zones.

Other laws and regulations dealing with monetary, financial, trade, administrative and labour affairs as well as issuance of visas were discussed in the bill which is to be presented to the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles) for final approval.

The islands of Kish and Qeshm off Iran's southern coast in the Persian Gulf have been declared as free trade zones. Work is in progress on a massive scale at the said islands, which when complete, are expected to a pivotal trade-industrial role in the whole region.

Towards the end of its session the cabinet praised the services of Hojjat-ol-Eslam Mohammad Khatami-Ardakani, who after 11-years as minister of culture and Islamic guidance resigned last week.

Larijani Cited on Private Sector Boosting Economy

LD2307104992 Tehran IRNA in English 0828 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Tehran, July 23, IRNA—A senior official has underlined the role of the private sector to boost the national economy saying that Iran should create an "economic domain."

"Even the oil, petrochemical and natural gas sectors should be handed over to the private sector which can produce better results," said Majles Deputy Dr. Javad Larijani, in an interview appearing in today's issue of the TEHRAN TIMES.

On foreign investment, Larijani said reliability was the most important factor "for which the creation of an economic domain can be the best formula."

However, Larijani said, "this economic domain should be a two-way affair which can be a guarantee for success."

Larijani, also a member of the Supreme National Security Council, said the government's role should be just that of "an observer and inspector" to keep the private sector within limits of the country's laws and national interest.

Larijani who was elected to the Majles in the fourth term, said Iran had all that was needed for a "genuinely powerful" country and "what we need is a general policy based on realism. We should be realistic in our overall policy."

He was deputy foreign minister for Europe and America and later an advisor to the foreign minister.

Larijani, a member of the Majles Foreign Affairs Committee, spoke of two ways in consideration of the state of national economy.

"One which has been used for a long time is the use of oil wealth derived from sales abroad to import goods needed by people and distribute them to consumers at subsidized rates.

"This is one of the most pernicious ways for our effort to reach economic independence."

Speaking on the second way, he explained this as "stepping into the export market and investing the income gained from oil sales abroad in the industrial field which should be export-oriented." To do this, he said, a "national strategy" was needed.

"I personally believe that here exactly is the weak point of our five-year development plan. We don't really know in which types of industry we should invest in order to secure a good export market. And besides we seem hardly aware of what our business partners abroad really require of us," Larijani regretted.

* New Khuzestan Governor-General Appointed

92AS1247G London KEYHAN in Persian 16 Jul 92 p 2

[Text] Following changes in a number of governors-general, the Islamic Republic appointed 'Ali Tabesh as the new governor-general of Khuzestan. After approving Tabesh's position as governor-general, the Islamic Republic's cabinet praised the services of Mula'i, the former governor-general of Khuzestan. After the recent demonstrations in Iran's major cities, the Tehran regime changed the governors-general in most parts of the country.

* Ayatollah Jannati on Representatives to Republics

92AS1205Z Tehran ABRAR in Persian 23 Jun 92 p 3

[The following should be substituted for the item on page 70, column one of the 21 June Near East & South Asia DAILY REPORT, entitled "Jannati on Representatives to Republics", which was inadvertently published as an incomplete text]

[Text] News Service: Today, the world and even non-Muslim countries are in great need of becoming familiar with the Islamic revolution. The requests from people abroad for familiarization with Islam demonstrates that Islam has grown rapidly in comparison to other religions. This was announced by Ayatollah Jannati, the head of the Islamic Propagation Organization, in an interview yesterday.

The head of the Islamic Propagation Organization, who was speaking on the occasion of the anniversary of the founding of the Islamic Propagation Organization, by offering an analysis of the mission of the organization during its 12 years and its success domestically and in the international arena, emphasized that the Islamic Propagation Organization began its work in the year sixty [1981] under the Iman's guidance and by relying on the most devoted forces, accomplished the most number of services with the least possibilities.

Ayatollah Jannati pronounced that the Islamic Propagation Organization has so far sent 1,000 [number is used freely as an expression in the Persian language to denote quite few] "clerics" and "eulogists" to the Central Muslim Republics of the Middle East and has put forth numerous cultural efforts, namely the sending of 100,000 books to these republics. He emphased that these efforts are considered valuable services to Islam and to Shiism.

Explaining the characteristics of art in the Islamic revolution and its spread in the world, Ayatollah Jannati said: Islamic art must once again come to the scene and export the message of the Islamic revolution abroad.

He added: This important objective is not possible without being equipped with potential resources.

Continuing, the head of the Islamic Propagation Organization, stated that in the past 10 years we have been able to

participate in more than 100 international conferences, termed the activities of the Islamic Propagation Organization in the area of art and sciences very significant and said: With these efforts, the Research Institute of Baqer al-'Olum in Qom was established, and it successfully provided applicants with the necessary religious information, so that so far, information from 20,000 books has been collected, and 55,000 books have been catalogued.

Nepal & Bhutan

Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal Dying of Malnutrition

BK2307162192 Hong Kong AFP in English 1423 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Kathmandu, July 23 (AFP)—More than 870 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal have died from disease and malnutrition in camps in the country's southeast in recent weeks, local administration officials said Thursday.

"Out of the 54,896 Bhutanese refugees, over 870 died of malnutrition and seasonal diseases while 177 more babies were born at the refugee camps in recent weeks," the Jhapa District Administration (JDA) was quoted as saying by Nepal's national RSS News Agency.

Ethnic Nepalese living in Bhutan have been fleeing back to their homeland claiming persecution and atrocities committed by the Bhutan Government.

The JDA added that many refugees were still entering Nepal through the Kakarbhita border checkpoint.

Human Rights Organization of Bhutan spokesman D.P. Basnet on Thursday confirmed the report: "On July 21, as many as 24 truckloads of Bhutanese refugees arrived in Jhapa District in search for food and shelter."

The refugees have taken shelter in resettlement camps in southeast Nepal along the Kankaimai and Timai River banks, at Goldhap Beldangi, in Jhapa District, and at Pathari, in Morang District, reported RSS.

Meanwhile, statements broadcasted by Bhutan's state radio continue to reassure Nepalese ethnic communities living in the Kingdom that they need not leave their homes and return to Nepal.

But Basnet claimed the government's words did not match their actions and that authorities in districts the refugees are leaving have begun to sell cash crops grown by them.

"If the eviction was not pre-planned, why is the district administration auctioning the cash crops of the innocent villagers even before their departure," Basnet said.

Basnet also claimed the radio appeal to the refugees to stay in the kingdom came at a time when 400 families were awaiting transportation to the Nepalese border to be deported.

King Returns After 5-Day Visit to India

BK2207161592 Hong Kong AFP in English 1354 GMT 22 Jul 92

[Text] Kathmandu, July 22 (AFP)—King Birendra of Nepal and Queen Aishworya returned here Wednesday after a five-day unofficial visit to India, palace sources said.

They were welcomed home by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and a number of other political figures from across the political spectrum.

Pakistan

PDA, Other Parties Conclude Resignation Talks

BK2307111592 Karachi DAWN in English 23 Jul 92 p 1

[Text] Islamabad, July 22—The PDA [People's Democratic Alliance] leadership has concluded its talks with other political parties on the question of resigning en bloc from the assemblies and holding a meeting in Karachi on July 29 to fix date for rendering resignations.

High-level PDA sources told DAWN on Wednesday that meaningful discussion had been held with some parties, including the Jamaat-i-Islami, the JUP [Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan], and the JUI [Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam], and they were also expected to submit resignations from the National and Provincial Assemblies to press for the holding of fresh, fair and free elections.

"There is no difference of opinion in the PDA about submitting resignations from the assemblies, and we are going to do that very soon," said Air Marshal (retd) Asghar Khan.

He told DAWN that it was government's propaganda that the Opposition was bluffing the people. "We would prove that we are serious to go for this option," he added.

Before the July 29 meeting, PPP [Pakistan People's Party] co-chairman and the Leader of the Opposition Benazir Bhutto will meet her partymen in Karachi. She has directed Deputy Opposition Leader Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, Chaudhury Aitzaz Ahsan, Mr Ishanul Haq Piracha and others to reach Karachi before July 29.

"We would simply surprise them as has earlier been indicated by the Leader of the Opposition," said Senator Iqbal Haider. He also said that all preparations had been made to stage a big, peaceful demonstration in Karachi to demand that Chief Minister Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah seek a fresh vote of confidence.

PPP spokesman Shafqat Mahmood refuted the statement of some ministers that Ms Bhutto had secured the resignations of only 15 to 20 MNAs [members of the

National Assembly]. He said the Leader of the Opposition possessed a little over 50 resignations. Similarly, she had received also the resignations of PDA members of the Sindh Assembly.

Mr Asghar Khan commented: "I am told that Nawaz Sharif has said that Ms Bhutto has only 19 resignations with her and that she is just trying to build pressure on the government. I can only pity such an ill-informed Prime Minister."

The PDA sources also said that a number of people from the Government were constantly trying to contact PDA members individually to persuade them not to resign.

MQM Asked To Verify Resignations

BK2307164192 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly Ata Mohammad Bari appealed to the Muhajir Qaumi Movement's provincial assembly members who have sent their resignations to personally appear before him at the earliest possible time for verification of their resignations. In a statement in Karachi today, he said scrutiny of their resignations is almost complete and he is awaiting their verifications. He expressed the hope that a decision on the resignations will be made within a day or two.

PDA Members Criticize Threat

BK2407052092 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 24 Jul 92

[Text] Four National Assembly members belonging to the People's Democratic Alliance [PDA] have criticized the PDA's threat to resign and have described it as a conspiracy against democracy. They have said that they will not join any such type of action. In a joint statement in Karachi, Bashir Halepota, Abdullah Halepota, Dr. Khatto Mal, and Baghwan Das said that no democratic-minded National Assembly member will agree with the PDA's appeal.

Minister Briefs Press After Gulf States Trip

BK2307165592 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 Jul 92

[Text] Kuwait supports Pakistan's policy of resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute according to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. This was stated by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Siddique Khan Kanjoo while addressing a news conference in Islamabad today on his return from a four-day visit to Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar.

Briefing the Kuwaiti Amir, prime minister, and foreign minister about the latest developments in connection with the Kashmir issue, he said the international community and Pakistan's allies should play their role in this connection to prevent further deterioration of the situation. The minister also briefed the Kuwaiti leaders on the large-scale atrocities and human rights violations committed by 470,000 Indian troops in occupied Kashmir. Rejecting Indian charges on the alleged intervention of Pakistan in occupied Kashmir, he said Pakistan has taken solid steps to prevent people from crossing the Line of Control.

He said Kuwait has appreciated Pakistan for its role during the Gulf war. Mohammad Siddique Khan Kanjoo said that about 40,000 of the 80,000 Pakistanis who were working in Kuwait before the Gulf war, are back at their jobs in Kuwait and the remainder will also return soon. He said during his meeting with the leaders of Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar that he also apprised them of the situation in Afghanistan. On his recent visit to the United States, he said he apprised the U.S. leaders of Indian intervention in the internal affairs of Pakistan, especially in Sindh.

The minister of state for foreign affairs also said Pakistan has on its own initiative invited Amnesty International to visit Pakistan to take stock of the situation in any part of the country.

U.S. Using Security Council To Brutalize Iraqis

BK2307113792 Islamabad THE NATION in English 23 Jul 92 p 23

[Editorial: "Subjugating Iraq"]

[Text] On July 5, a 15-member team of UN inspectors was barred from entering the offices of Iraq's Agriculture Ministry. The Iraqi Government stuck to its decision citing the move as demeaning to its sovereignty and having no relevance to its agreement to destroy weapons of mass destruction under UN supervision. In the meantime the UN inspectors, suspecting key military documents to be hidden away in the Ministry, have remained parked outside the gates since. As the confrontation persisted the Ministry became the venue of anti-West demonstrations by Iraqi civilians, prompting the UN to take note of the threat to the safety of its representatives. Iraq was again branded as the bad boy, and it was conveniently forgotten that even in the period since July 5, other UN teams have continued work [word indistinct] usual and buildings and equipment at two nuclear sites. Tarmiya and (?Al-Sherqat) have been destroyed. The joke was carried too far when the power of the New World Order—the US, Britain and France—utilising the forum of the United Nations earlier this week, used this incident as a pretext to justify the possibility of another military strike against Iraq.

How is it that in the face of the mass carnage and the sinister occupation of over 70 per cent of the land of Bosnia-Hercegovina, the UN is content to make deprecating noises, impose sanctions and follow the conditions imposed by the aggressors to provide some relief to survivors before they become tomorrow's victims, when, in Iraq securing entry to a ministry office is considered important enough and urgent enough to present the need for military means and endangering lives of innocent

people? Hope for an impartial role on the part of the United Nations should now be firmly laid to rest; it is evident that the UN as a world body has been hijacked by the Security Council gang, [which] under the direction of the US and its coterie has become a convenient "high priest" subscribing to the US's brand of morality and carrying a rubber-stamp to certify as "morally necessary" the trigger happy actions necessitated by US strategic interests, and to drag its feet at every conflict where these interests are not involved. The message that this latest threat of war is sending out to the rest of the world is the same that was driven home by the Rodney King affair: that logic, foresight and humanitarian considerations do not necessarity intrude upon the cold science of a morally complacent, self-appointed policeman ready to use the stick to knock some sense into perceived transgressors. Have not the Iraqi people been brutalised enough through war and famine for the sins of an unrepresentative leader propped up in the past by the champions of democracy.

Iran Denies Ambassador Visited Hezb-e Wahdat

BK2307124592 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 23 Jul 92 p 4

[Text] Islamabad (PR)—The Iranian Embassy here has contradicted press reports that Iranian ambassador in Afghanistan, Najfi visited the fronts of Hezb-e Wahdat in Kabul.

An embassy spokesman said:

"These reports are totally false. There has never been any indication from the side of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran nor has there been any intention to interfere into Afghanistan's internal affairs. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been willing to extend whatever assistance possible to the Afghan mojahedin and in doing so has always observed the independence and sovereignty of Afghan people.

"The recent bloody incidents in Kabul where the lives of innocent people were lost are strongly been [as published] condemned by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and we are of the opinion that there are non-Afghan elements in such clashes who are the main culprits of such incidents. It is hoped that the Afghan Government will be in a position to quickly restore normalcy and stability in the country and by the way we have to also notify that so far there is only one consulate-general of the Islamic Republic of Iran to be opened in Mazar-e Sharif, and that is in accordance with the official agreement of the Government of Afghanistan, which has been expressed in an official note issued by the Foreign Affairs (Ministry) of Afghanistan in Kabul to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the documents of that note are kept by the concerned departments in both the countries. [no end quote marks as published]

Warm Water Access Offered to Central Asian States

BK2307165692 Hong Kong AFP in English 0926 GMT 23 Jul 92

[By Masood Shah]

[text] Karachi, July 23 (AFP)—Pakistan, seeking trade and communication links with the newly-independent Central Asian republics, has offered them access to warm waters following the installation of a friendly government in Afghanistan.

The main attraction to the Moslem dominated land-locked states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is access to the outside world through the Arabian Sea.

The republics, gaining independence after the demise of communism and the collapse of the Soviet Union last year, are keen to end their 70-year long isolation.

They want to re-establish alternate trade routes to western Europe, the United States, Japan and the oil rich Gulf countries.

Uzbekistan this week took the lead by signing the first ever tripartite agreement with Afghanistan and Pakistan for mutual cooperation in construction and restoration of highways to establish a reliable transportation system in the region.

Pakistan on its part will construct four motorways in war-ravaged Afghanistan and one in Uzbekistan. The motorways would link the bordering Pakistani towns of Peshawar and Quetta with the Afghan cities of Jalalabad, Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif and Hairatan.

Communication Ministry officials said Pakistan would also build a modern highway in Uzbekistan, linking Samarkand and Bukhara.

The latest accord follows formal membership the six republics obtained at the Tehran summit of a trilateral Economic Cooperation Organistion (ECO), grouping Turkey, Iran and Pakistan earlier this year.

The Central Asian republics, decided at a meeting in Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan, on May 10 announced an agreement on re-establishing road links among the member of states. [as received]

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has also signed air services agreements with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and weekly flights between Islamabad and Tashkent have already started.

The road-building projects will take several years to complete and require international financing from aid donors.

Officials said that when completed, the distance between Tashkent and Karachi port will be 2,000-2,400 kilometers (1,240-1,490 miles) as compared to the 3,000-3,500

kilometre (1,860-2,170 mile) distance between Tashkent and the Black Sea port of Odessa.

Thus the republics would have a short cut of nearly 1,000 kilometers (5620 miles) [as received] for transporting their merchandise by sea.

An equally more ambitious proposal, being considered by the regional leaders and their experts, is to establish rail links between Pakistan and Central Asia through Iran and Afghanistan.

Engineer Mohammad Ayub, minister for construction in the new Afghan Government, reviewed plans for laying a railway track between Peshawar and Kabul in the initial phase of the rail links project.

Pakistan railways officials said there were two alternates. Pakistan's well established railway system could be connected with the Central Asian republics through the western town of Chaman near Quetta via the Afghan cities of Kandhar and Herat and onwards. But it would require laying railroads in Afghanistan, which so far has no railways.

The second proposal being considered by Pakistani engineers is to link Karachi with Central Asia via Iran through its existing railway line across Koh-e Taftan mountains.

Kushka, the rail-head on Turkmenistan-Afghanistan border is about 750 kilometres (465 miles) from the Pakistani border town of Chaman.

Railway officials said that rail-road-rail transportation arrangement between Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan could be immediately put into operation if their governments agreed.

Uzbekistan president Islam Karimov and Afghanistan president Borhanoddin Rabbani are scheduled to visit Islamabad in early August to further study the two proposals and related matters with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other Pakistani officials.